

The Long Trial

OLIVINE NADEAU BOHNER



ADVENTURE FOR GOD ON OKINAWA


by Iona Clark Jensen

The island of Okinawa came into the headlines during World War II, and this book tells how this Pacific spot recovered from the disruptions and dislocations of war to offer a mighty challenge for Adventist missionaries. Modern ideas are in conflict with old superstitions and customs, and into this conflict is introduced the gospel of Christ. The author has recounted in delightful, fascinating style how God's providential leadings have brought the truth to Okinawa.

The author, Iona Clark, was married to Ejler Jensen in 1942. After three years of internship in Nevada, they went as missionaries to the Far East. A year was spent in Japan learning the language; then Elder Jensen was assigned to the island of Okinawa to begin mission work.



32
/ 32



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

**THE
LONG
LONG
TRIAL**

Pacific Press
Publishing Association
Mountain View, California
Omaha, Nebraska
Portland, Oregon



THE LONG LONG TRIAL

by

Olivine Nadeau Bohner

Illustrated by

Vance Locke

Copyright, 1960, by

Pacific Press Publishing Association

Library of Congress Catalogue Card No. 60-10103

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author thanks Amelia Sherrard, William Carey, Jr., Professor Clara Laidlaw of Michigan State University, and Professor Harry W. Taylor of Potomac University for their encouragement and criticism.



CONTENTS

The Trial Begins	1
Horny Hands of Toil	9
The Old Mirror	29
Beyond the Pail	39
Out of the Frying Pan	59
The Law of the Letter	81
Hoist the Sales	91
"Buy of Me Gold"	105
Senior College at Last	124
I'll Try It! What Is It?	131
"Walk With Me in White"	143
What Is a Diploma?	159



I stared at the ground, finger in mouth, not daring to move. At that moment nothing could have induced me to say a word.

The Trial Begins

EVER since the day I learned about the foot-pound I've had a grudge against physics. The foot-pound, as I recall, is a unit for measuring work—the name for a little piece of energy—enough to raise one pound one foot.

“So if you're digging a ditch,” the teacher explained, “and want to know how much you're working, you weigh your shovelful of dirt, measure the distance you throw it, multiply the two numbers . . .” The teacher's voice droned on, and I began wondering.

Maybe it was my feminine mind which led me to picture myself fooling around with scales and yardsticks without ever getting that ditch dug, but I was quite happy about the foot-pound. Here at last was one thing in physics I understood, or at least I thought I did until one of the boys spoke up.

“I'd like to ask a question,” he said. “Say I'm trying to push a car out of the mud, but I can't budge it an inch. I'm pushing, say, fifty pounds heavy. How much am I working?”

The teacher smiled slowly. “According to the formula,” he said, “you wouldn't be working at all.”

Well, that was enough for me. Here was the one

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

thing in physics I thought I understood, and it didn't make sense. It seemed very clear to me that a new measurement for work was needed. I could think of a dozen things that I considered work—mending, baby-sitting, studying, even going to the dentist. In none of those would you find more than one or two foot-pounds altogether. Why, even when studying physics itself, just about my hardest labor, I didn't do a single foot-pound of work. That formula, I decided, was lacking somewhere, and to this day, despite atomic submarines and guided missiles, physics and I are not on good terms.

I've done a lot of thinking on this subject of work, and I've come to the conclusion that it needs a broader definition. In my opinion *work is anything that requires effort and teaches you something.*

If you think that over carefully you'll soon see that you've worked a lot more in your life than you once thought. It came to me as a great surprise one day when I realized I'd begun working for my education when I was six years old. How well I remember the frightful morning when with lunch pail in hand I tottered off to school. How fervently I longed to break a leg or at least be hit by a car; but no such kindly fate intervened, and I soon found myself at the gate of the little country school. Slipping through the gate, I hoped to get to the building by creeping along the fence, but to my horror somebody spied me, and everyone stopped playing to stare.

"What's she skeered of?" I heard one say.

THE TRIAL BEGINS

"Hey, Bunny," giggled a big toothy girl with thick glasses, "what's yer name?" She looked so much like a rabbit herself that I wondered if that was why she called me "Bunny."

A fat, very freckled boy pointed at me. "What ya got fer lunch?" he called. He looked at least nine feet tall, and I froze solid on the spot.

"Come on. Whatsamatter, Goofy?"

I stared at the ground, finger in mouth, not daring to move. At that moment nothing could have induced me to say a word. I felt like something low and crawling that you find under a stone after the rain. If a kindly sixth grader hadn't rescued me, I'd probably still be there.

"Don't mind them, dear," she soothed. "They don't mean nothin'. What did y' say y'r name was?" And from that moment I began to view the world in a different light.

Now, I know the physics book would never call that ordeal *work*, but it took more adrenalin than any ditch digging, and it taught me not to be quite so stupidly sensitive. Since it fulfills my formula, I, therefore, call that experience work.

I was not born with a natural love for work of any kind, whether you measure it in foot-pounds or adrenalin. In fact, it was work that decided me to run away from home when I was eight years old. We had moved to an isolated farm by that time, where thick woods enclosed the few fields, and bears were not unknown. On a lovely June morning, mom had asked my younger

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

sister, Iris, and me to do the breakfast dishes. I loathed washing dishes and let it be known in loud lamentation.

"Dishes," I howled. "Why do we have to do dishes on such a nice day? Dishes, when the sun's out! Why—"

"You eat whether it's rainy or sunny," mom reminded me as she went to make the beds. But I was not to be easily pacified. My voice rose a note higher. "I don't care. I hate doing dishes, especially on such a—"

"Let's run away," Iris put in. It was her first word since the fracas had started and seemed so practical a suggestion that I stopped crying and brightened immediately.

"Let's," I agreed, sniffing, and wiping my eyes on my skirt. "Then when we never, never come back, she'll be sorry." I had a fleeting vision of a frantic search being made while we lay cold and pale under some alder bush. Somehow I found the thought comforting.

"Let's go really, really far," I whispered as we started down the steps. Iris said nothing, but she swallowed and looked anxiously back at the house.

We ran as far as the barn; then we began walking because the hay was high and the sun was hot. "Don't look back so much," I snapped.

"But the house is getting so small," came the wail. We went on, but our steps slowed as the alders thickened. When the dense, dark woods loomed in front of us, we sat under a bush to meditate awhile and consider our next move. Usually I loved the soft sighing of the wind in the firs. I liked to think that if angels ever

THE TRIAL BEGINS

whispered it would be like that; but now the sad sound made me want to cry. We were both thinking of the same thing—a few days earlier in the muddy road that passed our house papa had shown us a real bear track.

“That must have been an awful big bear,” I said, speaking almost to myself.

“Do you—do you s’pose it could come this far?” Iris faltered.

“Of course; bears walk miles and miles sometimes.”

Iris looked in the direction of the house, but it was hidden behind the slope. In the trees the wind rose, rustling and whistling with a ghostly sound. Wide-eyed and pale, we stared at each other. I thought again of lying cold and white under some bush, and this time, strangely enough, found it not at all comforting. Suddenly somewhere in the woods a twig snapped. That was too much for our tense nerves. And both jumping up at once, we scampered home without a backward glance. We found, a little to our discomfiture, that mom hadn’t even missed us. At least, if she had, she wisely said nothing and we sheepishly did the dishes without another word.

Life was soon to teach us that there are quite a few things worse than washing dishes. That very summer papa set us to work picking potato bugs. And to this day, for the most revolting of all jobs I nominate trudging along a dusty row of potato plants picking up crawly potato bugs and dropping them into a pail of kerosene. There’s only one comfort in it. You know it’s tougher on the potato bugs than it is on you.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

There were times, though, when we began to realize that work can be a pleasure. A few months later those same potatoes had to be harvested. Frost came early in that part of New Brunswick, and one afternoon in late September papa said, "Folks, there's going to be a hard frost tonight. Every one of these potatoes has to be picked before we can go to bed." So all afternoon we toiled, papa going ahead digging with the hoe, and the rest of us following with our baskets.

We were soon tired, but being at the age that hates going to bed we were happy at the prospect of staying up later than usual, even if it meant working. As the afternoon wore on our backs and legs ached, but somehow it was very satisfying even to us children to sniff the solid smell of the black earth and to see the neat bags of potatoes pile up, secure from the frost.

By sundown there were still plenty of potatoes scattered over the slopes, but papa leaned on his hoe a moment to look at the flaming sky. As the brightness touched his face he seemed to be seeing the last veil before the face of God. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," we heard him say softly, and we knew that God's ear was so close he didn't have to speak any louder. Little by little the glory faded and the whole sky deepened and sparkled like the clear blue heart of a sapphire.

We kept on digging and gathering, and soon the stars gleamed out, and the moon came up, mellow and round and yellow. Though utterly weary, we found a strange, happy excitement in working fast to race the frost while the air grew colder and colder.

THE TRIAL BEGINS

It must have been eight o'clock when we gathered in the last sack, and papa called out, "Good work, girlyies! Let Mr. Frost freeze away now," while we all trooped into the warm kitchen. We sat down to steaming potato soup, johnnycake, and baked apples, and I never hope to feel any more content if I find all the gilt-edged securities at the end of all the rainbows.

That winter, the main work I did couldn't be measured in foot-pounds, but it took plenty of effort and gave me just about the most valuable thing I ever learned, for I taught myself to read. Using mom as a dictionary I followed her all around the house spelling out words in the accumulated copies of *Our Little Friend*.

One day as I scanned our bookcase for something simple I hadn't read, papa came along and put his arm around me. "Someday you'll be able to read all those by yourself," he promised.

Incredulously, I gazed at the fat church histories, the source books, the big, heavy commentaries, and wondered. But papa had said it; so it would have to come true, I decided. From that moment began my determination to get an education.

Even in later years as I toiled through dry histories and endless commentaries for some research paper, I sometimes smiled a little to myself, feeling a bit proud, even then, to be fulfilling papa's prophecy.

By the time I'd reached fourteen, I considered myself quite accomplished, having mastered cooking (potatoes and boiled eggs), child care (much wisdom

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

gleaned from baby-sitting), piano (two hymns by ear), and sewing (three bushels of dolls' clothes as well as several aprons no one wore).

But despite this dizzying list of achievements I had yet to learn about what papa persisted in calling "real work." My father, I'm afraid, was more inclined to agree with the physics book in his definition of work. "Never mind," he kept repeating ominously, "your time will come."

When our family moved near an academy and I read the school catalogue, I suddenly realized that "my time" had, indeed, come. To my dismay, I found that school would cost money and that education from now on would mean work—the kind measured in foot-pounds.

But I had learned one thing in the years since I'd run away from the dishes, namely, that most really worthwhile things are acquired by work. And so the long, long trial began.

Horny Hands of Toil

IF ALL women were like my mother, the cosmetic companies would fold up tomorrow. She never had time to apply anything but soap and water to her face, and when her hands were rough from endless chores she applied, not a lotion, but a motto. "Blessed are the horny hands of toil," she'd laugh. Be her hands brown or rough or stained, the treatment remained the same, so that throughout childhood I believed blessedness without calluses to be an impossibility.

I suppose those lofty people known as psychiatrists would call mom's motto a "defense mechanism," but I'd call it a pretty sensible philosophy. Besides, it was a lot cheaper to say, "Blessed are the horny hands of toil," than to buy hand lotion, especially during the depression when, at our house at least, such things were considered luxuries. Mom's motto grew out of her country background and her belief in the virtue of hard work. During most of her life grandpa had tilled a hundred stony acres with a team of horses, a few implements, and his bare hands. As was expected of women in her day, grandma kept a big house, cooked three meals a day, did a huge weekly washing, churned the butter, and made the bread. She also found time to rear twelve

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

children, knit socks and mittens for all of them, make numerous quilts, hook fancy rugs, and help grandpa in the field during planting and harvesting. She would have snorted openly at such a thing as an automatic dishwasher, or buying a certain kind of soap because it was "kind to your hands." As far as soap was concerned, the main question was, "Does it get the grease out?" So there was always plenty of yellow laundry soap in grandma's house for everything from ears to overalls, and if it took the skin off, so much the better. That proved it was good soap and that you were really clean. To grandma, "horny hands" were part of any woman's equipment, and soft, white hands were a disgrace.

Nevertheless, when I was ten years old I considered beautiful hands a thing greatly to be desired. It was all right with me if mom wanted calluses. In fact, according to the poems in our readers, that was the way mothers' hands were expected to be; but, for myself, I wanted none of it.

It was about this same time that I became fascinated with the little coupons in magazines that offer free samples of things. It scarcely mattered what. Anything coming to me personally through the mail was terribly thrilling, especially when it had the added virtue of being free. So Iris and I filled out endless coupons and got packages of flower seeds, wallpaper catalogues, recipe books, and things, useless to us, but still free. But if by any chance we could get something in the cosmetic line, something with a scent, our delight knew no bounds. We loved hand lotions in particular, and

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

one sample introduced to us by a little neighbor girl sent us into ecstasies. It was supposed to be an "Italian Balm," only she called it "It-'lee-an."

It never occurred to us that there might be anything ridiculous in our going around reeking like a perfume factory while we lugged wood and water, fed the chickens, and carried peelings to the cow. I had some notion that maybe if I always smelled beautiful I might wake up some morning with curly hair, and surely if I wore hand lotion continually I'd be saved from (how I hated the sound of it!) those "horny hands."

However, it would have taken more than lotion to save me the summer before I started academy, for that was when I learned for the first time what "horny hands" could mean. I hoed corn, weeded beets, carrots and soybeans, and picked just about everything that grows on bush, vine, or tree. At the end of the summer I viewed my hands ruefully and decided I had no more to learn about horniness. The blessedness? Well, learning about that took a lot longer.

During July that summer we picked raspberries in the patch behind our house. I'll never forget those raspberries because of one particular afternoon. We were all picking peacefully, my two sisters and mom and I. Mom was saying, "Let's try to finish this crate before supper. Those people will be calling for it at seven."

"Oh, I'm sure we can," I sang out. "It's only three o'clock and I'm on my fifth box already and it's . . . What's that strange noise?" I referred to a deep hum



"Watch out," I screamed as I leaped over a row of berry canes. And, looking back, I saw angry black spots darting after me.

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

that seemed to fill the air. Then suddenly my feet were on fire, and I waited to hear no more.

"Watch out! Watch out!" I screamed as I leaped briskly over a row of canes while the berries shot everywhere. Looking back as I flew, I saw angry black spots darting after me. The loud, furious humming was everywhere.

"They're after me! They're after me!" I shrieked, scrambling through the bushes to the nearby brook.

Of course, everyone was mystified by my antics. Mom cried, "What on earth?" while Pauline and Iris looked at each other and tapped their foreheads. I limped out of the bushes a few minutes later rubbing mud on my ankles and groaning, "A wasps' nest! They stung me in . . . let me see . . . four, five . . . seven places!"

Most of the land we lived on had been rented to a large canning company that had it planted in corn and tomatoes. When raspberries were finished we had quarter-mile-long rows of tomatoes to pick. As I looked up to see those endless rows stretching to the horizon, there were times when I wished tomatoes were still considered poisonous and grown only as ornamental plants.

Whenever I remember that field I think of the afternoon the woman came. It had been cold and rainy all day, so that instead of picking we were all sitting in the living room. A few days before we'd been told we had to move, and as yet we had no idea where we'd go. Perhaps it was the uncertainty mixed with the dreary

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

drip of the eaves that made us all a little cranky, for we sat looking out at the rain, snarling at one another.

Iris was at the piano dinning out her favorite piece, and Pauline sighed martyrlike, "Really I'm so sick of that piece. Do you have to play it every time you sit down?"

Iris loftily ignored the remark and began the piece again. "I wonder where we'll put the piano in our next house," she mused dreamily.

"The girl says 'house,'" I hooted. "If we move under a bridge, honey, that piano will look pretty silly sitting in the water."

"Never mind," mom put in. "We've never lived under a bridge yet, and God isn't going to let us now!"

Just then a knock came at the door. Upon opening it, we found a woman in a big, shapeless raincoat, dripping wet. Water dripped from every fold and from the limp strands of her straight hair, and when she smiled we saw that her four front teeth were missing. "Do you have any tomatoeth to thell?" she asked.

Mom admitted that we did, but we girls weren't at all happy about it, knowing that one of us would have to go slipping and sliding along a muddy row to pick them. "She must want them awfully bad to come out in this weather," Iris whispered as we ran out into the cold rain. We had to be careful not to let the sticky mud pull our rubbers off, but soon we were back with a full basket of wet, muddy tomatoes.

Mom was talking rather excitedly as we came in. "You mean to say your house is for rent?"

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

"Oh, yeth," said the woman. "We ain't goin' to live there no more. Ith too far from town an' all."

I could see she was one of those tireless talkers who needs no answer, just your presence, to rattle on forever.

"Yeth," she continued, "I want to get out of that houthe. It don't have no thellar and ith kinda small anyway. Ya thee, I got five kidth, and the way they run around that plathe ther ain't room for nothin'. I dunno whath wrong with them kidth anywayth. They alwayth got coldth all winter into thpring—"

She stopped for breath, and mom asked, "Would it be all right if we came over to see your house tonight? Just where did you say it was?"

"Oh, shure, glad to thee ya. The old man'th home nightth," and with much gesturing and a lot more talk she explained quite plainly the way to her house. The next time she stopped for breath I put the basket of tomatoes down beside her chair, hoping she'd take the hint and go; but she merely kept on talking.

"I alwayth buy tomatoeth for me ol' man," she continued, pushing back her damp strands of hair and rum-maging through her clothes. For a minute I thought something was biting her, but finally she found what she sought, a little black wad of a change purse from which she extracted a quarter. All this time her tongue, of course, had never stopped. "He liketh 'em fine," she went on, "but one thing he shure do hate, and thatth thpaghetti." She handed me the quarter. "The latht one I got," she giggled.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

Mom had started lighting the fire to cook supper, and Iris was rattling dishes in the pantry; so our visitor, much to our relief, began wrapping her capacious black raincoat around her. It must have been very old, for it rattled like paper. Then, picking up the tomatoeth, I mean tomatoes, she left.

That evening mom and I set out to find the place. The rain had stopped, but the night was damp and clinging like black velvet. Splashing through puddles, trying to follow what landmarks we could recognize along the road, we felt our way. For what seemed hours we trudged, and finally mom said, "I think this must be it. Didn't she say three roads over?" There were a few lights glimmering in the distance. We turned up the road toward them, and soon came to a small house.

"From what she said, this is it," I announced. "There seem to be plenty of children." Every window was lighted and quick shadows darted past the blinds while shouts and screams made the walls vibrate. Suddenly the door burst open and two boys ran out screaming and chasing each other around the yard.

"Oh, dear," mom breathed, "we never did learn her name, did we? Who shall we ask for?" But just then we heard, "You kidth come in here thith minute," and through the lighted door we glimpsed our visitor of the afternoon. There could be no mistake. The lank hair, the lisp, and the gaping smile were the same.

A man appeared at the door. "You two get in here," he shouted, "before I tan you good."

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

"I think he means the boys, mom," I laughed as we both started. We stepped into the square of light thrown by the doorway. "Good evening," mom said in a small voice. "I believe it was your wife who came to our place this afternoon and said this house was for rent. We're interested—"

"What ya say?" shouted the man.

"That woman in the house—she said this house was for rent."

"For rent! Oh, nobody believes *her*. Talks all the time. That's all she can do. She's all wet." The woman behind him grinned gappily. She certainly *had* been wet that afternoon, I remembered.

"You mean you aren't moving at all?" mom persisted.

"We ain't even thought of it," he growled and slammed the door.

"He wasn't very nice," mom observed meekly, "but he probably does have a lot to bear." As we picked our way through the long, wet grass to the accompaniment of shrieks and wails from the little house, I was inclined to agree with her.

The muddy journey back didn't seem so far as we sloshed along, resolving to deal very firmly with any future toothless visitors having husbands who hated "thpaghetti."

We finally moved, and as mom had promised, we weren't reduced to living under a bridge. One of our new neighbors, who was going south to pick fruit, invited me to go with her. Glad for a chance to earn something, I went. The first thing we picked was

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

peaches, and I learned that, though eating peaches may be one of the most delectable occupations known to man, picking the things is quite a different matter, especially at the end of the harvest. Besides your basket you must lug a heavy ladder and climb high up into a tree, reaching out precariously to get two or three peaches. The ladder grows heavier as the sun grows hotter, and the peach fuzz gets down your neck and prickles furiously.

But finishing the harvest didn't take long, and finally, peaches over, we began picking grapes, dewy blue Concords. That was fun, particularly when we were allowed to eat all we wanted. Grapes are so reasonable. They grow on nice low frames, and best of all, they're not fuzzy. I didn't make much money, but I grew terribly healthy, and in a couple of weeks I'd lost most of my calluses.

Life had much more to teach me about "horny hands," however. I found that out the very next summer. At the academy which I proposed to attend, it was possible to work at the woodwork shop and be paid, not in cash, but in credit which counted toward one's tuition. It was at this shop that I got a taste of work hard enough to satisfy any physics book. Everything about the place simply bristled with foot-pounds. We worked ten hours a day, six days a week, at twenty cents an hour. Dragging myself wearily home each evening, I often wondered how I could bear the sight of another morning. Tired as I was, I hated going to bed, because that made the morning come sooner. So

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

my sisters and I took the blankets off our beds and, every night that summer, slept in the haymow. That way, no matter how long we chattered we kept no one awake but ourselves. Most evenings we spent singing rounds, songs, and hymns in harmony. Bernard of Clairvaux's "Jesus, Thou Joy" was our favorite. Maybe it was because that lovely old tune had vaulted up through so many cathedrals, that it sounded so clear floating up through the rafters of the old barn; but the words particularly seemed to hold a radiance.

O Jesus, ever with us stay;
Make all our moments calm and bright;
Chase the dark night of sin away,
Shed o'er the world Thy holy light!

And for a few moments the world was beautiful. But always clouding my thoughts was the inevitable morning with the cold, damp mist creeping through the barn and the ten hours of work stretching interminably ahead. When morning came I rose wearily, combed the hay out of my hair, shook the crickets out of my shoes, and bent my aching limbs to dress. Then, stepping over my sleeping sisters, while envying them with all my soul, I stumbled down the rough ladder and hurried to breakfast and work.

The shop had the clean, pleasant smell of new wood, and in the early morning it was so still you could almost hear the spiders spin their webs. But at seven o'clock the mill roared into life as the big saws began whirring and screaming.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

That first morning the foreman led my friend Molly and me upstairs to the assembly room and showed us the legs of two ironing boards in frames on the workbenches. I looked at the clean pieces of wood without interest.

"These will have to be riveted," he explained, picking up the hammer. "Now watch!" And tap, tap, tap; before I'd had time to sneeze at the dust he made he was finished.

"All right, now you try."

I picked up the hammer and, pushing with all my might, hit the rivet squarely on top and bent it.

"No, no, like this. See? Hold the hammer nearer the head. Don't push. Let the hammer do the work, and hit the edges of the rivet."

Next it was Molly's turn. By ten o'clock we'd both learned to do one rivet with three taps. Already our legs ached from the continual standing.

"It's only ten o'clock," Molly sighed. "How can we stand two more hours of this?"

Lunchtime seemed years away, and we were faint already. Below us the big machines rumbled and shook the floor, and our heads roared with them.

We worked on awhile, getting more efficient all the time, and again I looked at the clock. Eleven! "Let's go on piecework for one hour," Molly said. "I know we won't make much money, but come on, just for fun. See who gets the most done before noon."

From then on we really tapped with a vengeance. Our motions became mechanical . . . place wood, fit

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

rivets, tap, tap, tap. Our heads swam; our arms moved in a blur; place wood, fit rivets . . . "What time is it?" I asked, stopping to rest my arm.

We were suddenly conscious of a deathly stillness, no shouts, no roar, no screaming saws. Molly ran out to look at the clock and came back laughing.

"Guess what time it is!" she grinned.

"One o'clock?" I shrieked.

"No, but it's twelve fifteen. Can you imagine us forgetting?"

We didn't do *that* again, ever.

Sometimes we rodded ladders in the big room downstairs where stepladders lying on their sides stretched in endless rows like fences. Our job was to fasten a greasy metal rod under each step. That meant black hands, broken fingernails, and aching backs from hours of bending.

Of course, the poor foreman had his trial, too. I'm thinking particularly of the day Molly and I nailed table skirts. (The "skirt" is the frame to which the top and legs are fastened.) The foreman showed us how to set four boards in a frame, and glue four little wooden insets into the corners. Last of all we nailed the insets to the sides.

"Oh, I love this job," Molly gurgled.

"It's a lot better than rodding ladders. We don't have to bend so much."

"And we walk around enough so we don't get tired." Molly gathered up some nails and picked up her hammer.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"What you wearing to the picnic?" I began as I started slapping on the glue.

"Oh, my old blue thing. What else? If I can find a minute to sew the buttons on. Don't hammer so hard. The glue's flying in my eyes."

"I do wish I had time to make myself a new skirt. That is, if I had some material. I suppose I *could* make one out of old newspapers."

Molly laughed. "But what if it rained? This working for credit! Can you remember the last time you saw a real dollar?"

"A real what?" So we prattled on all afternoon covering our past, present, and future while we blithely glued and hammered.

"I wouldn't mind being a nurse," I was saying above the hammer strokes. "I think I'd like the work, but I can't bear the thought of those gruesome sciences. You know, microbiology, bacteri—" I stopped. Molly wasn't listening, and there was something about her face that reminded me of a speared salmon. I turned to see the foreman, who was viewing our pile of finished work. He appeared to be suffering pain.

"It seems that you've nailed most of these together upside down," he said evenly.

"Upside down?" Molly blurted. "I didn't know there was any difference."

"Well, there is," he went on in the same even tone that showed how he was barely holding his temper, "and most of these will have to be done over again."

We thought of the wasted time, to say nothing of

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

the nails and glue. "Shall we begin now?" we asked sheepishly, wishing he'd throw his hammer or kick us or at least shout at us.

"No," he said in a dull tone, "not now. It's nearly six o'clock."

For several days after that we waited, but we were never given that job again. I was quite sorry about it, because nailing table skirts was one job I liked even when I wasn't chattering.

Instead, I printed curtain stretchers, piles and piles of them. The foreman said he gave me that job because I did it so well; but as far as I was concerned, being the best curtain stretcher printer was a very dubious distinction.

The work itself wasn't so bad; that meant pressing long laths into a big iron frame which you pulled down against a press that printed the numbers on. The dreadful part was putting ink on the press. It was impossible to do that without inking my hands, and that black had to wear off. It wouldn't scrub off, scour off, or bleach off. Tottering home after a day of printing stretchers, my legs ached as usual, and my feet were heavy, but my black hands hanging at the ends of my tired arms seemed even heavier. Any other day wasn't so bad, but it was even worse if it happened to be Friday.

"Mom, what will I ever do?" I mourned as I scrubbed and scoured. "Will you look at my hands! And tomorrow is Sabbath." As a last resort I poured bleach into a pan and soaked my hands in it, but they remained



Someone could always be counted on to say, "These dear girls work ten hours a day doing a man's work. I think it's wonderful."

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

black as ever. "I'm going to sit on my hands in choir," I wailed. "I'll just have to. I'm ashamed to hold the hymnbook."

By this time I was close to tears, but mom had only one comfort to give. "Blessed are the horny hands of toil, dear," she smiled.

"Oh, mom," I exploded, "isn't it ever, ever possible to be pretty and blessed at the same time?"

Quite often visitors would pass through the shop, coming in groups and looking on with that patronizing, self-satisfied expression people always get when they're watching somebody else working.

Someone could always be counted on to say, "Just imagine, Henry, these dear girls work ten hours a day doing a man's work. I think it's wonderful!"

We thought it was terrible, but we smiled demurely and kept on riveting.

"You must really work up some muscle." This from some quiet little rag of a man in a rather envious voice.

I wanted to say, "Yes, I sometimes think I'm getting muscles in my head," but instead I smiled and said, "Oh, sure, lots of it."

We learned to wait expectantly through all this patter, and at last it would come. Somebody would say, "Wonderful, isn't it, Pete? Girls in our day couldn't drive a nail straight to save their lives."

That was the cue; the wit of the group would swell up a bit and say with a wink, "By the way, ever hit the wrong nail?" and immediately roar with laughter, quite intoxicated with his own originality.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

The funniest part of it all was that we knew where the idea came from. Down by the punch clock a huge poster warned in flaming red letters, "*Don't hit the wrong nail!*" I used to wonder about that poster. Its author evidently had in mind some poor demented laborer who'd come in waving his hammer, muttering, "Oh, good! Now that the boss isn't looking I can hit my thumb," and he'd raise the evil instrument when, just in time, his eye would light on that noble poster.

"No, no, better not," and his arm would fall harmlessly while his eyes filled with repentant tears.

Anyhow, all visitors loved that motto. We heard it quoted so often that whenever we saw people coming we'd say, "Now watch for the wrong nail," and when it came we laughed so hard the fellow invariably thought he'd missed his calling and should have been a comedian.

So the days wore on, each ten hours seeming longer than the last. Unless you've actually stood continuously for five hours nailing ironing boards you won't know what I mean. Your feet ache, your legs tremble, and you think your arm will surely break from the hours of steady tap-tap-tapping. You wipe your brow with the back of your hand while the sawdust falls into your eyes and you lick the salt off your lips and keep on hammering.

One day at five, I looked over at my friend Lynne, who'd been working next to me all afternoon. We'd been singing a duet, "Back of the Clouds the Sun Is Always Shining," I think it was, to keep up our spirits;

HORNY HANDS OF TOIL

but we'd finally become too weary even for that. Lynne was beginning to look haggard.

"One more hour," I said, trying to strike a cheerful note.

She said nothing, only shrugged and spread out her hands in a weary gesture that knocked the box of nails all over the floor. We looked at each other and giggled helplessly. "Wonderful!" she chuckled as she sank to the floor and proceeded ever so slowly to pick up one nail at a time and drop it into the box.

"You're pretty far gone," I murmured solicitously, dropping down beside her. "I guess I'd better help you." And covered though it was with sawdust, shavings, crooked nails, and sharp bits of wood, that floor was a very restful seat.

I worked only one summer at the shop. When it was all over I decided that I wanted no more of that kind of work for the present or future; but it was a wonderful experience for one's past. After all, it would be too bad to be a grandmother someday and not be able to say, "Really, child, do you call *that* work? Now when I was your age—" But whatever I say, I'll never fail to close my homilies with that surpassing adage: "Blessed are the horny hands of toil."



You'd have thought it was Snow White's magic mirror that told who was beautiful, but it could only tell us how drab we looked.

The Old Mirror

THE next time I go home I'm going to ask mom what happened to the old dresser—the one that always stood against the sloping wall in our room under the eaves. That piece of furniture looked solid, but we girls knew better than to lean on it. Pulling out the drawers was perilous enough, but the mirror was the worst. It was a swinging one that wouldn't stay put, and on its back the silver was blistering off in black patches.

The way we pushed for room in front of that mirror, though, you'd have thought it was Snow White's magic mirror that told who was beautiful. As it was, the mirror could tell us only how drab we looked.

That was early in the forties when, though the depression was over for most people, it was not for us. Dad was earning \$2.50 a day in the academy woodwork shop, and we three girls were still in school. Any extra money went for schoolbooks and shoes, and any pride had to be gulped down hard. Bundles of old clothes from various donors were a common thing at our house, but the fact that we wore castoffs never bothered us so much as when we were all dressing in front of the old mirror.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

I remember one Sabbath morning in particular. We were about to be late for church, and everybody was pushing. Pauline was staring into the glass saying, "Hey! Is that a spot on my dress? Oh, good. It's only on the glass."

"Really," I sighed as I tried to peer at myself over her shoulder, "I sometimes think we'd get just as far if we went and looked at ourselves in the brook. At least we'd have more room there. O.K., Pauline, it's my turn now. Move over." I made a face at my reflection. My dress was olive drab and made me look bilious. Worst of all, I know that Mrs. Gluhoff, the donor, always recognized it. Every time I wore that dress to church I could feel her eyes on me all the way down the aisle.

"Never mind, Beautiful, it makes you look like an army tank." And Iris stuck her head in front of my face while the mirror wavered dizzily. "There's no getting around it." Iris tied her scarf and looked at herself glumly. "Everybody knows this was Sophie Smith's coat. Who could forget it?"

"Cheer up, kiddo," I said. "Red looks an awful lot better on you than it did on Sophie. And quit shaking the mirror. I'm going cross-eyed."

"Anyway, our shoes are ours," Pauline philosophized. "Thanks be for big feet."

I suppose if it hadn't been for mom we girls might have slunk around under a continual drizzle of self-pity, but mom accepted all donations gratefully and without bitterness, and we girls had learned to do the

THE OLD MIRROR

same. We were always optimistic about donations. In fact, the arrival of any bundle was the signal for a celebration.

I remember one night at supper as we sat finishing up our potato soup (we were always eating potato soup in those days—potato soup and bread and molasses), mom said, “Oh, yes, Mrs. Ferris gave me a box of stuff today. Some clothes her sister gave her, I guess.”

“Oh, goody,” we shouted, and licking the molasses off our fingers, we pushed back our chairs and dragged in the box. We always had a party whether the things were wearable or not.

“Just look at this” we howled holding up a dress, circa 1929, with a low waistline and a six-inch accordion-pleated skirt.

I shook my head hopelessly. “Not worth a thing.”

“Oh, I don’t know.” Iris pounced on it chuckling. “Such lovely orange chiffon! Mrs. Vanderswelt will just love it.”

“And this hat is just too, too charming for dear Lillian,” Pauline gushed. “Make a good sieve, too,” she added realistically, holding it up to the light. “Must be people think we’re worse off than we are.”

About that time my sisters disappeared dragging the rags after them, and in a few minutes returned disguised as Mrs. Vanderswelt and her devoted daughter Lillian. Mrs. Vanderswelt was very chesty and always wore something with a train. Lillian giggled a lot, swishing her orange chiffon and teetering around on old spool-heeled shoes that were obviously too small for

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

her. Lillian flounced to the scarred old piano and smashed through a grand introduction, playing on the whole keyboard and using her elbows as well as her fingers. Somewhere in the midst of the noise Mrs. Vanderswelt began to sing in a very shrill, shaky voice that seemed to come from behind the piano.

"There's a lo-ong lo-o-ong nail a-grinding into the heel of mi-ah shoo-oo," she quavered, making the nail seem very long indeed and even a little rusty.

I'm sure the people who passed those rags on never realized how much fun they gave us, and though we never wore half the things we received, we wasted very little. The worst rags went to grandma for making mats, and newer pieces went for quilts.

When it came to making over I used to think I knew a little about how our forefathers worked. *They* attacked the tangle of some virgin forest, hacked out a clearing, reared a rough cabin, sowed and reaped and sowed again until, in time, they produced a homestead they were proud to own.

It wasn't much easier to attack the tangle of some rag bag, pull out an old coat, rip it, press it, match and figure, sew and rip and sew again, until in time you produced a jacket that you were—well, if not proud—at least resigned to wear.

I'll never forget the luxurious feeling I had the winter I was sixteen when I first cut into a piece of new material. It offered such endless possibilities. The idea of being able to pick any pattern! And no piecing! It was almost too marvelous to believe. For me that dress



A voice came ringing, "Hello, Emma! How'd ya like them dresses I gave ya? Lovely, ain't they? When you're goin' to wear 'em?"

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

always held an air of magic, almost as though I'd cut it out of the bare sky.

We often found that some of the most generous people were also the most tactless. One kind soul met mom after church one day and announced in a loud, penetrating voice that she had a few things we could use. "Really lovely," were her words. "Almost new."

The things came, and as was often the case, the dresses had been new when we were babies, and there were some wool things which had served as fodder for moths longer than they had been clothes for people.

A few weeks later mom and I were shopping in the supermarket at rush hour. The place was full of people we knew, when a loud, familiar voice came ringing across the aisles. "Hello, Emma! How'd ya like them dresses I gave ya? Lovely, ain't they? When you're goin' to wear 'em?"

Mom smiled and murmured something. I don't know what she said. I was trying to hide behind a pyramid display of dog food.

Another major source of bundles was the Ladies Aid Society. The leader was our friend and always gave us first chance at all donations. One day when there had been a particularly large windfall I came in to find our kitchen looking like a bargain basement. Covering the couch (the couch was in the kitchen because we had no parlor) was a pile of yellowed lace curtains so old they fell apart at a touch, while the table was half buried in old silk stockings. Mom was methodically taking one stocking at a time and drawing it over her

hand, but most of the stockings went back into the box. People seldom gave away good ones.

My sisters were both digging through overflowing boxes, occasionally pouncing on something with a squeal, but more often rejecting the prize a little dejectedly.

"Finding anything good?" I asked.

"Not much. Quite a good sweater here. See?" Pauline held it up. "Real pretty blue, but there's a big hole in the elbow."

Sighing and putting down my books, I glanced over the offering with a practiced eye. Besides curtains and stockings there seemed to be mostly ragged underwear, stiff, shrunken sweaters, and old knitted suits with skirts as narrow as stockings.

"What's this?" I asked as I grabbed for a flash of red. There was a dull ripping sound and a wail from Iris.

"O-oh, now you've torn it, and I was going to make a nice blouse out of that."

"Well, really, honey, if it's that rotten, it's hardly worth it. Oh, see this!" And I dragged out something black that turned out to be a skirt.

"That thing!" cried Iris as I held it up. "Make you look like an old laundry bag."

"It's good material, though, and I could always take those stupid bows off." But thinking of all the work involved, I rejected it.

In the end we kept none of it and, gathering up the lot, passed it on to another family. They evidently did the same, and the heap was passed on again until

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

at last it must have circled back to the Ladies Aid.

When we received a new bundle a few months later we fell to looking with the usual optimism. But we hadn't dug far when a steady succession of old stockings and musty curtains made us stop and look at one another. We dug a little farther only to find every hem line crooked and an endless supply of threadbare lingerie. Then out fell the sturdy black skirt with the inane bows.

"It's the same stuff!" we shrieked, howling with laughter.

"Well, well," mom giggled, wiping her eyes on somebody's old drawers. "They must have run out of poor people."

Once more we passed the bundle on, and for all I know it may be doing the rounds yet. Only we've moved out of its orbit.

By the time I finally worked my way to college I had all I could do to keep solvent without worrying about clothes. My roommate was almost as poor as I, and more than once as we compared our scanty wardrobes with some of the more brilliant plumage that flitted about the halls, we looked a little wistful.

One night as we toiled on our homework, one of our more fortunate neighbors tripped in. She had on a trim little navy suit, and, holding her dainty white gloves, she twirled on her toe like a model. "My new spring outfit," she caroled. "How d'you like it?"

We made the appropriate approving noises, and when she had gone Lynne sighed and put down her

THE OLD MIRROR

pen. "For two cents I'd quit school just so I could get some decent clothes."

"Yeah, me, too," I crooned, as I pictured myself in "What the smart co-ed is wearing."

"You know," Lynne was saying, "get a job and—"

The word job woke a dreary train of thought as I recalled the long trail that had brought me that far—the acres of floors scrubbed, mountains of dishes washed, endless bushels of tomatoes picked, books sold— Suddenly I felt very noble. I held up an imaginary lorgnette.

"It's merely a matter of our sense of values, my deah," I intoned pompously. "Either we wear the medieval outfit known as the cap and gown, or we quit now and start growing new feathers."

By this time Lynne had thrown both her shoes at me as well as her psychology book. When I saw her eyeing the ink I lowered my lorgnette.

"O.K., O.K.," I laughed. "You know it's true."

Lynne picked up her book and continued studying, but I couldn't get my mind off the past. Once more I saw bundle after bundle, so many rags, and us girls parading in front of the old dresser.

"Is that spot on my dress?"

"No, dear, it's on the glass. Now move over, will you? and quit jigglin' the mirror."

We used to talk about doing away with the old dresser. With its dry, brittle wood it would have made a beautiful fire, but I doubt that it suffered such a fate—not if I know my father.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"Burn that dresser!" he'd say. "Why, my dear little girl, that's a good, solid piece of furniture. All it needs is a little glue." So to this day that "solid piece of furniture" probably leans rather wearily against some attic wall waiting for "a little glue." Do all the images its mirror reflected come trooping back sometimes? To me, one of those images stands out particularly.

The day I returned after my first year of teaching and being independent, I climbed up to the little room under the eaves and walked over to the old dresser. It swayed a little as I approached it, and the old, stained mirror wavered as I set my purse down; but I could still see my reflection. It was the most satisfactory image that mirror had ever given me, for as I scrutinized my clothes I realized that everything I had on I'd bought myself. Suddenly I felt strangely elated as if I'd graduated from something. I curtsied to the image in the mirror and shook hands with myself Chinese fashion. Looking around a little sheepishly, I was relieved to find myself still alone; and if the old mirror thought me a fool, it didn't say so.

Beyond the Pail

MUCH as I hated it, I could never seem to get away from housework. By "housework" I mean anything to do with keeping a home—cooking, baby-sitting, and cleaning of all kinds. I might have been very disheartened except that I tried always to see beyond the pail and the scrub brush and the dishpan to a cap and gown and that scrap of paper called a diploma.

My first experience at housework lasted only a month, but it was harder on my long-suffering mistress than it was on me. Wordsworth summed me up very well when he said, "Something between a hindrance and a help."

Thirteen and hopelessly dreamy, sensitive, and slow, I got tears in my eyes at every word of direction. A reprimand was enough to set me sulking for half a day, and there was plenty of reason for reprimand. Lost in thought, I'd gaze out the window while the baby's formula boiled up and ran all over the stove.

And I had a way with the dishes!

Maybe my trouble was that the cups hung on hooks, but time and again I reached into the cupboard and, as I withdrew my hand, suddenly there at my feet would

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

be another cup in pieces. Wearily I'd go to find my mistress where she lay sick in bed, and as I told the sad tale she'd smile a little ruefully and say, "Well, it's all right, dear, but please don't break any more cups."

"Oh, I won't," I'd promise cheerfully, and I didn't. The next time it was a saucer I broke.

Any way I looked at myself, I was a failure. I longed to be home again where life was simpler and all the cups were chipped anyway.

The last day on that job I gathered my few clothes together and on an impulse decided to wash my hair. Finishing my work as it dried, I idly wondered why my head seemed so itchy. I knew I'd just washed it clean. Just as I finished my work my friend Lynne called to visit me.

"Oh, you've washed your hair!" she said, scrutinizing me a minute. "You know what? You ought to part your hair on the side. Look, let me show you."

She had just begun combing when she gave a low cry. "You've got bugs!" she whispered.

"What?"

"Bugs! You know. Lice!"

I was speechless for a full minute. Finally I found my tongue. "Well, that explains why I've felt so crawly," I shuddered. "O-o-oh, I'd like to set my hair on fire."

"But where on earth could you have gotten them?"

"It must have been at that Free Camp we went to. The girl next to me was always using my comb."

Suddenly, I couldn't get home fast enough. If I'd felt a failure before, I felt completely unfit for human

society now. And once I was home, Mom's treatment didn't restore my dignity. I spent most of three days soaking my head in kerosene. Between times mom fine-combed my hair till my scalp was raw.

"Oh, what shall I do when people find out?" I bawled.

"No one will unless you tell them." Mom's matter-of-fact tone seemed very heartless.

"But they will if my hair falls out," I sniffled, "and the way my head feels I just know I'm going to be bald as—as—a turnip."

Though my hair remained rooted I still blamed housework for all my discomfiture. For days I moved in an atmosphere faintly tinged with kerosene, and whenever I thought of washing dishes the echoes of breaking china made me shudder.

But such are the blessings of poverty that when I was sixteen I once more found myself forced to become what the newspaper ads called "a mother's helper." Mercifully I found work with one of the kindest women the generation has produced. I tried hard to please, and as school opening approached I felt I'd really earned my money. I was especially proud that I hadn't broken any dishes.

The last day came, and as I was clearing the table I picked up a piece of the tablecloth with a stack of dishes. What happened next is not too clear, but there was a fearful crash, and, looking down in horror, I saw a good portion of Mrs. McDougal's china in pieces. I pictured myself leaving with nothing but my bus fare.

"How much will all this cost?" I croaked, trembling.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"If you were staying, I'd ask you to pay for it," said that goldenhearted soul, "but since you're going back to school I won't. You need the money."

I wanted to fall at her feet and clasp her knees, but I had to be satisfied with breathing a feeble "Thank you" and going home glowing with gratitude.

I'll always remember that home-coming. There was brilliant moonlight with a nip in the air and frost sparkling along the fence rails. My two sisters came running down the lane to meet me. They had impressive news. "You know what? Papa's had a raise, and mom buys butter nearly all the time now."

For the next two summers I managed to avoid housework. It was during the summer after my sophomore year that I worked at the woodwork shop, and the next summer I had my first experience canvassing. Finally, the following year, 1944, I graduated from Oshawa Missionary College Academy, and Elder G. E. Jones, then president of Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts, was our commencement speaker. He cast quite a spell over some of us seniors, and though I was thrilled with graduating, most of that weekend I was thinking of the future. Whatever happened, I determined that someday I would attend Atlantic Union College.

Our finances being what they were, immediate prospects of college seemed impossible, and my friend Lynne had a bright idea. The Ontario government, in trying to cope with the wartime shortage of teachers, had made a call for all high-school graduates interested in teaching to come to a special summer session at the

provincial normal school in Toronto, where was offered free board and room besides a short normal course. A temporary teaching certificate was to be issued at the end of the session, and there was no doubt that some position would be available for every fledgling teacher come September.

"Let's do it," Lynne said. "There's nothing to lose, and I think teaching would be fun. We can save our money and go to college the next year."

So we had decided to go. My main reasons for going were not very noble. It is true that buried deep in my subconscious there had always been a leaning toward teaching and a small desire to serve, but mainly I knew that Lynne and I would have a lark together wherever we were. Above all, I was quite sure I'd like teaching better than housework.

Summer school was a ten-week course of six-hour class days in which our normal-school masters did their best to forge a bunch of starry-eyed teen-agers into worthy teachers. There was plenty of work for us, but Lynne and I enjoyed ourselves, even in the fearful class in school management where the cherubic-faced teacher with his halo of white hair raised his pointer like a baton and proceeded to talk in a hushed whisper of attendance aggregates, monthly reports, and that sacred tome called the "Attendance Register."

Finally, in August the session was over and Lynne and I boarded the bus for home. "Well, summer school was no party," I remarked as we took our seats, "but at least it was better than housework." Leaning back and



As I approached the house, I noticed several children playing in the yard. "Must be someone visiting," I mused.

dreamily watching green fields and farms whizz by, I planned my last few weeks of vacation. "Of course, I'll help mom around the house," I chattered happily, "but I'll still have lots of time to sleep, read dozens of books, play the piano." Life would be very good, I decided, and I could hardly wait for the tranquillity to begin.

Arrived in Oshawa, we took the local bus home. Lynne got off at her house, and a half mile farther, I disembarked at the town line. As I approached the house, I noticed several children playing in the yard. "Must be someone visiting," I mused.

Upon closer view I saw that the place was fairly swarming with children, mostly around four or five years old, and all as uninhibited as puppies. Crossing the lawn, I greeted them cheerfully and swept up my two-year-old brother Lionel for a welcome hug.

Entering by the kitchen, I saw at a glance that there were no visitors. Mom, sitting at the table cutting up rhubarb, smiled her welcome. "How's everything?" I asked.

Iris jumped up from the piano, and Pauline came tearing down from upstairs. The first bear hugs over, I asked about all the children.

"Oh, the children? I'm keeping them," mom said mildly.

"You're *what?*" I yelped.

Mom laughed. "Well, not really *keeping* them, not for good. Just by the day while their mothers work. Except Dahna; she's staying all summer."

"Now you've gone and done it," I grumbled, sam-

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

pling a piece of raw rhubarb. "My, this stuff's sour."

"It's just a nursery," Iris sighed. "Now you can join the nursemaid crew. That's Pauline and me."

"About as quiet as a three-alarm fire around here most of the time," I reflected with some bitterness.

Mom poured sugar and water on the rhubarb and set the pan on the stove. "It isn't so bad," she said. "But before you start making any big plans for yourself, I have news for you. Just found out today I can get a ride with Landers. They're leaving in two days for New Brunswick, so now that you're home I think I'll go, too. Been years since I was home."

"I should have known," I groaned, "but it's O.K. Run along. We'll manage all right."

Thus it came about that two mornings later instead of rising at a leisurely ten and meandering down to play the piano, I rose with the sun, bade mom good-by, made breakfast, got papa off to work, and was ready at eight to welcome "the nursery."

The first thing we faced was an immense washing; so we made a bargain. I agreed to do the wash alone if Pauline and Iris watched the children.

Our washing machine was one of those ancient wooden things that looked like half a barrel set on legs. It squeaked and protested throughout the washing, but it finally got the clothes clean, and it was easier to operate than a washboard. After half a morning of coaxing the old machine, rinsing, bluing, and wrestling with the hand wringer, I finally staggered out with a basketful of wet clothes.

Out in the orchard where the lines zigzagged back and forth from tree to tree, the wind flopped the wet sheets around my head and snapped the towels in my face as I pushed the lines higher with poles. Searching the ground for any stray clothespins, I then proceeded to pin up the last batch of socks. "And to think," I mused bitterly, "that people willingly marry and ask for all this." I pushed my hair back. "Not for me," I vowed. "Not on your life."

Suddenly, someone called from across the road. I knew without turning that it was our neighbor, Mrs. North. There was a peculiar whine in that voice that I'd have recognized anywhere.

"Oh, grief!" I sighed, "must I hear about gallstones at a time like this?" But I waved cheerily anyway, and to my surprise she called, "My, but yer wash looks real lovely and white. Yer mother's real lucky to have a daughter like you."

Repenting all my hard thoughts, I said, "Oh, thank you, Mrs. North. That's very encouraging," and promptly forgave her all the hours I'd spent listening to accounts of "shooting pains in my back . . . dull pains in the pit of my stomach . . . and you know I think every morsel I swallow turns to lead."

When I came in, Iris had begun peeling potatoes and Pauline stirred up the fire.

"Well, how's the nursery department?"

"Pretty good, for them. Of course Danny and Eva had a squabble. They always do. Eva, pretending to be a truck, fell down and scraped her knee, and Danny

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

made her mad saying she had a flat tire. They were having quite a hair-pull when I separated them. And then Jerry cut his hand on a broken bottle, but I poured on some mercurochrome and tied it up. Guess everything's quiet for now, but don't dare breathe," Pauline finished somewhat wearily.

Listening, I heard nothing, so I ran out for a quick look. The children were in a little huddle looking intently at something on the ground.

"What is it?" I asked.

"See? It's where my hand bled," Jerry said proudly, pointing to a small spot on the grass.

"And the ants is all eatin' up Jerry's blood," Danny reported from where he squatted gazing at the ground.

"They are not. Th'r drinkin' it," retorted Eva.

"Ants are always hungry," I said, but the children only heard one word.

"I'm hungry, too," squealed Eva, her tight red curls bouncing. "I'm awful hungry."

"Me, too! Me, too!" came the chorus.

"Now listen," I said firmly. "Dinner will be ready in a few minutes. Why don't you play London Bridge for a little while? Here, Dahna, you and Jerry be the bridge. Now everyone line up. That's the way. All sing, now."

"'London Bridge is falling down, falling down, . . .'"

As soon as they were absorbed, I ran off quickly to speed up dinner before a general riot developed.

"Are the carrots done? I'll set the table. Pauline, see about chairs. Oh, dear, there aren't enough cushions."

"Never mind. We always use the dictionary and the concordance."

"O.K., Iris, round up the kids. I'll put the food on."

At the first call the whole herd came clattering in, with curly-haired Eva in the lead, screaming, "Me first! Eva first!"

Pauline and Iris stood them in a row, and working from both ends of the line proceeded to wash off enough of the sand so they could find their mouths. Then with much shuffling and scraping of chairs they were perched on their seats and pushed up to the table.

Grace said, the real hubbub began. "Oh, Oh! Eva didn't close her eyes durin' prayer. I want my puddin' now."

"Never mind, Danny, put your feet down, and don't bang. Let's finish our vegetables first."

I turned just in time to see Eva up to her favorite trick of tipping her chair and teetering dangerously on the two back legs.

"Eva," Iris reminded, "do you want to fall into the oven again? Come on now. Sit up and eat your carrots and maybe they'll straighten your hair out a little."

"Oh, Jerry! Where's the dishcloth? Do be more careful. Now here's some milk."

"Why so sad, Dahna?"

"I want to know, do I got to take my viteemuns?"

"Of course, lover girl. What will your mamma say when she comes back and finds all the pills in the box?" So Dahna dutifully gulped the fat capsule like a little ostrich swallowing a big orange.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

After lunch there was a blessed hour of quiet while the children took naps, and I gathered in the clothes. When the children woke there still remained the long afternoon to play in the sandbox or under the wide shade of the maples. Five o'clock came at last, and one by one the parents came to take their charges home until only Dahna and Lionel were left. They informed us that they were hungry.

The evening was peaceful and made up somewhat for the rather chaotic day. Papa came home, and after supper the children were bathed. Then we girls went out on the lawn, where we sat in big chairs rocking the little ones and singing. The soft wind, smelling of new hay and distant rain, soothed our faces, while the darkness lay gently on our eyes.

Dahna gazed long at the star-studded sky. "Do the stars burn you if you touch them?" she asked suddenly.

"They might, but we can't ever touch them because they're far, far away."

"Can't we go there and see them sometime?"

"Not now. When Jesus comes we will. Now only the angels can go to the stars."

Dahna snuggled down closer, wide eyes fixed on those myriad points of light. Above and around us the endless leafy whisper of the big guardian maples made a cool river of sound.

"Do the angels stand on them?" she asked presently.

"On the stars? I suppose so."

"Don't the stars break?"

"Well, no, dear. You see the stars are enormous,—"

"As big as the house?"

"Oh, much, much bigger, too big to imagine," I finished helplessly.

For a minute I looked at the sky through Dahna's eyes, and all the stars were huge Christmas tree ornaments, maybe as big as the house, but all fragile and tinselly just the same. It was a pretty picture to keep, I decided.

"Lionel's asleep," Iris announced. So we carried our two sleepyheads upstairs and tucked them in.

"Quite a day!" I sighed to myself as I wearily found my own bed.

"Tranquil vacation!" mocked an inner voice, and I couldn't help smiling a little as sleep crept over me.

That first day was quite typical of the next two weeks, but such busy days passed quickly, and soon mom returned amid general rejoicing.

I began, then, to try to find a teaching post, but everything I tried came to nothing. When, as a last blow, our grades came and I found I had failed in school management, I lost heart. The teaching situation in Ontario was such that I could have found a school if I had persevered, but the truth of the matter was that I was a little afraid of teaching. Since our local junior college could still provide me with two years of education, I decided to go back to my old school at least for a year, and my dream of teaching, of saving my money and attending a senior college, faded farther into the distance.

But if I was to go to school, even at Oshawa Mission-

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

ary College where I could live at home, I knew with a dreadful certainty what I would have to do to pay my tuition. There was only one kind of work available, and that was the worst kind of housework—cleaning by the day. So I became a cleaning woman, complete with pail, scrub brush, and sore knees. Every morning I attended classes, and most afternoons I cleaned somebody's house.

But there's no work so lowly that it teaches you nothing. I became quite expert in the care of hardwood floors, and above all I learned speed and efficiency. I sometimes cleaned, waxed, and polished seven floors in an afternoon—and that without the aid of electricity.

I worked for a whole gallery of interesting characters. There was Mrs. Grimm, the slave driver, who had me flying around so fast washing, sweeping, scouring, scrubbing that I fairly melted into my shoes. I worked furiously until ten minutes before my bus left. Then I panted, "Mrs. Grimm . . . my bus is going . . . in ten minutes . . . puff, puff, . . . I really must . . ."

"Ten minutes! Here, you'll just have time to take this rug out and beat it."

I ran out the door dragging the rug behind me, and for five minutes was lost in a cloud of dust as I beat it unmercifully. Then I just had time to grab my coat and my pay and streak for the bus. I never went back to Mrs. Grimm. I figured that slavery is against the law, and life is too short at best.

To keep things balanced there was gentle Mrs. James, who was afraid to ask me to scrub the toilet or

BEYOND THE PAIL

wash the floor. She did the hardest scrubbing herself while I vacuumed the rug and gently dusted china figurines. She usually gave me a lunch and every hour or so insisted that I rest; but she was an exceedingly rare type.

Mrs. Sniff was a *nouveau riche*, very particular—and proud of it. She had some notion that fussiness and aristocracy were synonymous. Her house was a pseudo-English cottage, dark and breathless inside with heavy drapes and thick maroon carpets that showed every speck of dust.

Feeling like some priestess going through a meaningless ritual, I washed the clean woodwork every week, polished the gleaming mirrors, and scrubbed the spotless enamel. There wasn't much satisfaction in it.

Wherever I went Mrs. Sniff came pussyfooting behind me to see that I didn't rest, that I killed every germ, that I didn't steal the wallpaper. I'd see her scrutinizing one of her table lamps.

"Did you knock this over?"

"No, but the vacuum cord caught it the other day."

"Well, I guess it's all right," she'd say grudgingly, disappointed at not finding a flaw, "but don't try fooling me. I see everything."

I'd dust the big mahogany table. Soon I'd see her examining it, her head on one side.

"Did you dust this table?" she'd ask with pain in her voice.

"I certainly did."

"Well, dust it again. I see a piece of lint over there."

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

I worked for Mrs. Sniff quite a while, but one day I found my nerves wearing thin and decided that the poor woman really needed more to do, so I telephoned and told her not to expect me back.

I never ceased to be amused at Mrs. Stein, a little old Jewish woman who looked like a dumpling set on toothpicks. I never saw her when she didn't have a cigarette in her fingers or a wreath of smoke around her head.

Somehow she had the idea that I was undernourished and insisted that I eat all kinds of queer indigestible little pastries. At ten minutes to six when I was running for my bus she'd say, "Oh, you poor girl! You must be very hungry. You vill faint on the vay. Here, take this pancake. I vill roll it op, and you can eat it on the bus." I had quite a time getting out of that one.

To save money she hired me only once a month, and by that time the house was so dirty my work was more like excavating than anything else. Every time I came she'd be waiting for me in the hall, her arm wrapped in a sweater for her arthritis, the everlasting cigarette in her fingers, pointing out the cleaner, rags, and steel wool. "First you vash; then you vax," she'd remind me, as though I could have forgotten. "I adore the vay you vax my floors."

Most people didn't want stairs waxed, but on one occasion, for some reason best known to herself, Mrs. Stein insisted that I make her long uncarpeted stairs "nice and shiny." So I laid the wax on, and when I left they really gleamed.

The next time I came her son let me in. I noticed his leg was in a cast, and he was using crutches. "Oh, oh," I thought to myself, "a silent tribute to my workmanship," and so it proved. He'd fallen down the "nice shiny" stairs.

That afternoon as I scrubbed away I called out wickedly, "Want lots of wax on your stairs today, Mrs. Stein?"

"Oh, no darlink, chust leaf the stairs."

So I did. My aim was to please.

For all my scrubbing the end of that school year found me in debt once more. I spent the summer canvassing, which left me more in debt than ever, and I knew as autumn approached that Atlantic Union College would have to remain a dream for one more year. For the time being there seemed nothing to do but to fall back on housework once more. This time I kept house for a family of five, hoping thus to pay off my debt and perhaps even save a little. Such a job, as any housewife knows, leaves very little time for crocheting or writing sonnets.

To make a little break in the everlasting round of bedmaking, potato peeling, and dishwashing, and to help me feel that I was still a student of sorts and not completely bovine, I went to art school two nights a week. Of course, I also had the secret hope that I just might become rich and famous selling paintings.

I'll always remember the confusion of that first night. It seemed that everyone in the city was taking art, and they were all trying to crowd up the same nar-

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

row stairway. Following a strong smell of turpentine and linseed oil, we finally came to a room full of easels and plaster busts. I waited and waited while people rushed back and forth. A few students were sketching at the far end of the room, but they seemed in another world. No teacher appeared. No class started. For what seemed like years I waited while people milled about. My face grew stiff. I began to feel that I'd been waiting there most of my life and that no one would ever come.

"I'm just one more statue," I mused. "After a while everyone will go home, and the janitor will come and dust me off; I'll just be one more unnamed work of art. In a few hundred years I'll be known as, let's see . . . 'Working Girl of the Twentieth Century, by unknown sculptor.'" Just then the teacher appeared and restored my sanity by calling the class to order and starting us sketching plaster busts.

The class was so large that the teacher had time to make the round of the group only once in an evening. Anxiously we each awaited our turn with the teacher. After sketching the plaster models, we went on to landscapes. I could never make my canvases look quite like the color prints we were set to copying. And the teacher came by infrequently.

"Oh, please, what will I do with these clouds? They look like buttons." And the teacher would take the brush and dab for a minute. "There now, see?" and he'd go on to the next easel. I'd stand back to consider my picture. The buttons had become clouds.

BEYOND THE PAIL

Under such conditions we were bound to learn more from each other than we did from the teacher. I learned a lot watching one Scotsman who, in a couple of evenings, painted from memory a snow scene so real you could smell the frost.

There was a pimply faced youth named George who never did anything impressive with his brush, but made up for that by making great use of his tongue. He considered himself my unofficial tutor and gave me much more advice than I could use.

"You need more yellow on those trees," he'd say. "Here, see what I'm doing."

His canvas always looked as though he'd been pelted with eggs, and I could find nothing to say except, "Mm-m-m-m."

George used to tell me how he sold his paintings for thirty and forty dollars each, and I began to have visions of making more from paintings than I did in a whole month from housework. But I never could seem to make enough pictures ahead to sell. Always, before I'd finished one painting a friend would see it and ask for it and that would be that.

One day while I was doing dishes I suddenly decided I'd had enough of scrub pails and frying pans. I had never forgotten my dream of teaching, and somehow, though I was still fearful, I knew teaching would be better than housework.

"Molding little minds," I dreamed, as I recalled the literary tributes to the teacher: Oliver Goldsmith, and John Greenleaf Whittier, and Matthew Arnold with

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

their warm poetic portraits, and the books by Thomas Hughes, Edward Eggleston, and James Hilton. How they made the profession glow! "To be a teacher," I mused. "How fine! How noble! Besides, it would be a good way to pay off that school debt." I looked down at the dishwater in disgust. My mind was made up.

Of course, I suppose no woman ever escapes housework for long. What this chapter marks is the end of my doing housework for other people. Keeping house for yourself, after all, is quite a different matter.

Out of the Frying Pan

I CAME home from my housework job the Christmas of 1945 determined to say good-by forever to scrub pail and frying pan. My plan was to call up the county inspector of schools to see if he needed any teachers. The day after Christmas was mild and gray, but as I sloshed through the dirty snow on the way to the neighbors to telephone, I began to regret my hasty decision a little. "I'll just call him, though," I decided. "No harm to call. He probably isn't home, and it isn't likely he has a school anyway."

The inspector was not only home, but to my horror answered the telephone himself. "Why, yes," he said, "there just happens to be a school in Winaga that's been closed for two months. But there's one thing you should know: I'm afraid there's been a little trouble with the discipline and . . ." As he went on I listened with half of my mind while the other half began to whirl dizzily. When I hung up, my heart was pounding, and I could not seem to breathe. I should have known, of course. Any school not having a teacher by December would likely have a shady history; but I telephoned the Winaga school board to make an appointment for an interview.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

The Winaga school-board secretary had a gruff voice, and I pictured a farmer. "Oh, yes, we sure need a teacher, all right, but I feel it's only fair to tell ya that these here children is kinda—well—hard to manage and—"

On some idiot impulse I blithely cut in, "Oh, that's all right. I'm not afraid of anything."

There was a noise at the other end of the line that sounded like "Hr-r-umph." I didn't try to answer. "Well, we'd like ta look ya over," he went on. "How about eleven o'clock on Friday morning in the lobby of the Winaga Hotel? Kin ya make it?"

I assured him I'd be there and dazedly hung up, feeling that the receiver had grown to my hand. I hurried out of the house.

For all my brave, fearless talk, I kicked myself most of the way home. What was it they'd told us in normal school? *Teaching is fun. The discipline is what you're paid for.* "Evidently I'm going to earn my money," I told myself grimly. "If I'm hired, that is."

When I announced my decision to the family, mom looked at me the way the hen looks at a duckling she's hatched when it starts to swim. The rest of the family were more voluble.

"You teaching!" cried Iris. "Boy, I can just see it. Those poor kids!"

"Will you have a strap?" my little brother wanted to know.

"Oh, she'll be O.K.," Pauline added. "She's had plenty of practice bossing us."

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

I retired to a quiet corner and tried to remember how you make a class schedule.

When I met him a few days later, the school inspector was kind. Of English background, he was a very serious man who wore a neatly clipped mustache and a tweed suit. "You've never taught before?" he asked gravely.

"No."

"Well, I'll give you two weeks' trial."

"Better let me have a month."

"All right, a month then." He shook my hand firmly and gave me a penetrating look in which sympathy and concern were just nicely blended.

"Good luck!" he said as I closed his office door.

Winaga was not far from my home, but Friday morning as I packed my suitcase in all good faith that I'd be hired, I felt that I might as well be going to the hinterlands of Tibet.

Twenty rumbling miles later the bus rattled down the main street of the little town and stopped in front of the one hotel, an overgrown house. I went in and sat on the wooden bench waiting. In the adjoining room there was a candy counter, a deer's head mounted on the wall, and a flourishing pot of ivy that trailed all around the room. I was curious about the man behind the counter. He looked like a horse with a deep grief. I couldn't help wondering what would happen if he smiled. Evidently the same thought had occurred to other people, for I found out later that he was ironically known as "Smilin' Jack."

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

I was looking at my watch for the eleventh time in as many minutes when three men came in. I knew they were farmers by the shiny, scrubbed red of their faces and a vaguely uncomfortable look they had as though they couldn't wait to get back into overalls.

The youngest of the three approached. He had a friendly smile. "Are you waiting for the Winaga school board?"

I smiled and assented and tried to look "not afraid of anything."

"Guess we're it," he said. "If you'll excuse us a minute—" and before they'd fairly got in, they went out again.

In two minutes they were back, and I realized they'd been having a "board meeting." "Well, you look all right, anyway," they said. "We're ready to give you a trial." They spoke the truth, but little did I realize just how much of a trial it would be.

That was Friday. I was driven nine miles to my boarding house, and had the weekend to get settled before school started Monday. That very afternoon I walked to the school, a faded yellow building built at a crossroads and surrounded by big maples. Inside, the battered desks huddled around a fat, square stove as if trying to keep warm.

The school-board secretary had given me the children's names and grades, so I knew that I would have fifteen children and be both principal and teacher of six grades. I picked up an advertising letter addressed to "The Principal, School Section Number 3, Winaga."

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

"That's me," I thought wonderingly, but the thrill I felt was much closer to fear than joy.

I made a seating plan and finished my schedule before plodding back through the wet snow to the farmhouse where I boarded. Over the weekend my landlady, Mrs. Brent, entertained me with descriptions of my predecessors. The teacher who had started school in September had, it seemed, been a tired old ruin who flew into terrible tantrums, swore at the children, and threw spelling books. After they had let her go, they had hired a quiet little violet who wanted nothing so much as to rest in peace by some mossy stone. She had allowed the children the run of the school until they were using the windows for exits rather than the doors, jumping from desk to desk, and even eating the teacher's lunch before her eyes. This had gone on for a month, and finally school had been closed. That had been two months before.

I considered my position a moment. Here was I, my hands scarcely dry from the dishpan, with only a high-school education, one summer of normal school, and some additional studies at a junior college, attempting to tame this bunch of ruffians who had two teachers' scalps already. I began to feel quite sorry for myself.

"And then of course there's Kenneth," the good lady went on. "I s'pose you might say he's the main trouble, really. You see, he's not a Winaga boy. From the reform school, ya know. The Browns board him. Of course, he's only eleven, but they say the others put him up to things."

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"Oh, yes," I said weakly, wishing the next day were anything but Monday, "this is all very interesting, but I guess I'd better be going to bed," and I started for the stairway.

Just then the son of the house came in. He was a member of the school board. "One other thing, Miss Nadeau. I'm afraid the stovepipe down there is pretty well clogged. If it gets too smoky tomorrow you may have to let the kids out at noon."

With these cheerful words ringing in my ears, I staggered up to my cold little room where I lay staring into the darkness, wondering what kind of insanity had possessed me to leave the peaceful monotony of scrub pail and frying pan to jump into this fire.

I walked the short distance to school the next morning in a kind of daze. Some force—it must have been will power—propelled me along when my whole body rebelled. My feet moved like blocks of wood, and my stomach had turned to ice. I thought fondly on death or an earthquake. How I longed for a nice, destructive, accommodating earthquake. But Ontario isn't at all volcanic; so I prayed a queer little prayer. "Dear Lord, I don't know what I'm going to need today, but Thou knowest. Please send it to me, whatever it is. Amen."

By this time I was at the school. The acrid smell of wood smoke met me as I entered, and I knew immediately the secretary had spoken true. Three or four boys stood around the sullen stove and grunted when I said good morning. I picked out Kenneth from his descrip-



He was a wizened little farmer, but I blessed the sight of him.
"Don't let them talk you into nothin'," he whispered croakily.

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

tion, a pale, nervous, dark-eyed boy with a saucy set to his mouth.

One by one the children filtered in and clustered together at the back of the room, eyeing me suspiciously. At nine o'clock I girded up my brightest smile and went to the door to ring the bell. One of the trustees, a wizened little man, was standing on the steps. "Remember, Miss Nadeau," said he, "anything short of killin' 'em, and we're behind you."

Well, that was encouraging.

The first part of the morning went fairly well. For opening exercises and to get their interest I told them a rousing Bible story, the one about Gideon, and followed with classes in spelling and arithmetic. But the stove grew worse and worse. It gave very little heat, and smoke streamed out in a cloud. Fortunately the day was mild, but even with all the windows open we coughed and sputtered and our eyes streamed continually.

From the start I'd been watching Kenneth, expecting trouble momentarily, but up until recess he worked as steadily as the rest. During recess I noticed him in a huddle with some of the other boys. As they came in I wondered where the trouble would start, and I didn't have long to wait. I had just called them to order when Kenneth turned and whispered to the boy behind him.

"You have work to do, boys. We can't have whispering," I reminded. Kenneth gave me a saucy look and half turned. My attention was called away a minute

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

and over in Kenneth's area I leard a loud squeak and subdued giggles. .

"What's the matter over there, Roy?"

"Kenneth pinched me."

"Now listen," I said, "I know this smoke is bad, but work quietly until lunchtime, and then we'll all go home. It's just a few minutes."

There was silence for a short space, then just as I looked up I saw Kenneth poke the boy in front of him. Using his ruler he shot an eraser at the ceiling. The other boy proceeded to do the same while giggles followed, and I could see a small riot developing. My first paralyzed feeling had never left me, and I now began to feel as though I'd caved in. "Two weeks' trial," the inspector had said doubtfully. "I won't even last two days at this rate," I thought. My frozen brain could still reason that much. "Anythin' short of killin' 'em," the trustee had said.

"Kenneth and Ron, come up here, please."

They came. I opened my desk drawer and took out the strap. I hoped they wouldn't notice my hands trembling. "Hold the hand firmly," our normal-school master had said. "Don't hit wildly. Aim for the palm." But it's hard to punish when you're not angry.

Ron looked properly sheepish after the strapping, but Kenneth swaggered back to his seat, and I knew that in his case, at least, I'd made a mistake.

The rest of the children pretended to study, but always with furtive glances at Kenneth. He evidently had a reputation to maintain and knew it. He began

banging his pencil, quite deliberately, watching me all the while. I walked down the aisle and quietly took the pencil away. Scarcely had I gotten back to my desk when Kenneth sauntered up and picked up the pencil with a flourish. Some instinct told me a command would be defied. I had to do something fast. Whirling him around by the shoulder I quickly took the pencil.

"Get back to your seat, Kenneth. I'll give you your pencil when you can use it properly." I spoke in what I hoped was a calm voice, but desperation was building up inside me.

Quite unperturbed, he fairly strutted down the aisle. This was evidently the kind of importance he liked. Should I take him outside, talk with him? No, he already felt too much the hero for that to help. He started whispering to the boy behind once more, winking and pointing in my direction. He jabbed the boy in front, opened his desk, slammed his books. My mind was working in a slow kind of frenzy.

"Kenneth," I said, "please come up here." I wasn't too sure what I was going to do when he did come. His eyes narrowed and his mouth set in a straight line. He remained still as stone.

"Kenneth, I asked you to come here." Not a move. He looked much older than eleven, the hard look on his face, the very set of his body saying, "Try and make me."

"This is it," I told myself. "One of us has to go." The children were deathly still. I stood up, and the whole room swam before my eyes. I gripped the desk for

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

support, took a breath, and hoped my voice was steady.

"All right, Kenneth, if you won't do as I say, you may go. Take your books and your coat and hat and go home."

I almost expected defiance, but for once he was thunderstruck. Nothing like this had ever happened before. Mechanically he gathered up his books, and, walking a little dazedly, he left. An audible sigh went up from the school as he closed the door, much the same kind of sigh, I suppose, as the sailors gave when Jonah had been thrown overboard and the storm ceased.

By this time it was noon, so I dismissed the children. Then, tottering home, I went straight up to my room, collapsed on the bed, and howled. I felt cruel and hopeless. I felt sorry for Kenneth and for every bit of discipline I'd had to carry out. My eyes smarted from the smoke, and I was quite sure I was a complete failure.

I'd heard an old saying someplace that the only cure for madness is another bite from the same dog, the idea being if, for example, you've gotten stiff climbing mountains the only cure is to go out, pronto, and scale another mountain. Anyway, sore as I was after my first day of teaching, I knew the only cure was to go back again. As is usually the case, the second day things went much better. The air had cleared, for the trustees had cleaned out the stovepipe, and Kenneth was gone. The children filed sweetly in and set to work with a will so that by recess I was beginning to feel like a human being.

Then looking up I saw a strange man at the door. "Name's Bowman," he said coming up to shake my

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

hand. "I'm from the county reform school." And at that my heart sank.

"We were very sorry about this trouble Kenneth has had," he began.

I murmured that I was, too.

"Kenneth's already missed a lot of school this year, and he can't afford to miss any more. Now, just what was the trouble yesterday?"

"Kenneth refused to come and take his punishment when I called him, so I've suspended him for two weeks."

"Yes. Well, we'll see that he gets a licking ourselves, but we'd like to bring him back tomorrow."

If my heart had sunk before, it now dropped into my shoes with what seemed to me to be an audible thud.

I could find nothing to say as I struggled with a hundred conflicting emotions, yet I was pretty sure it would be a mistake to take Kenneth back so soon.

"Will that be all right?" Mr. Bowman persisted.

"I don't know," I said miserably, and felt myself weakening.

Just then one of the children came running to say that someone wanted to see me, and glad to escape, I ran to the door. It was the "anythin'-short-of-killin'-em" trustee. He was a wizened little farmer, but I blessed the sight of him. "Don't let him talk you into nothin', Miss Nadeau," he whispered croakily. "This neighborhood's mighty thankful for the way you've brought them kids around. You stick to yer guns and we're behind ya." I could have kissed his muddy boots. The

day was saved, and, thanking him, I went back to Mr. Bowman with a set jaw.

"I'm afraid it would weaken my discipline to take Kenneth back, Mr. Bowman, but don't worry about him. I'll give him extra help if he needs it, and he'll get through all right."

With that the man left, and I sent up a little prayer of thanks for the guidance that had come when I needed it most.

After two weeks Kenneth came back, promising good behavior and holding no grudge, but it wouldn't be truthful to say that he gave me no more trouble. There was the day he was absent, or so I thought until I went out at ten o'clock and found him behind the school writing everything he knew in red crayon on the back of the school building. He had reason to regret it and moaned a good deal before he'd finished washing and scrubbing. It took him one whole noon hour and two recesses to get it off.

Another day I wondered why Kenneth and Roy looked so mopy. They caused no trouble, just looked sick. I asked Kenneth, who looked particularly pale, if he wanted to go home. "Oh, no," he whispered, "she'd kill me." A very odd reply I thought, until later when I found out that two Indians they'd visited on their way to school had given the boys each a drink of whisky and a plug of chewing tobacco.

One noon hour the boys went on a long hike and came back fagged out. Kenneth looked so pale and drawn that my heart went out to him. As I passed I

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

patted his "butch" cut and said, "Poor old man! Did you get pretty tired?" He grinned shyly, looking grateful as a puppy. Like most of us he needed, more than anything else, to feel loved.

Near the end of the first month the inspector called very briefly. Striding in, he took a long look around. There was still glass in all the windows. I was apparently intact still—no slings, no crutches. The children were working in their places in what might be called a quiet manner. Going up to my desk, he sat down and glanced quickly through the register, then he rose to his feet.

As I knew he was a man of few words, I didn't expect much comment. He showed his teeth briefly in a grimace which I decided was a smile, then, turning to the class, he said, "Children, I'm happy to find you all working well. If you continue this you may yet have a worthwhile school year. Good morning."

With this he nodded slightly in my direction, picked up his brief case and strode out. I heard no more from him; but the board must have had some word, for they hired me for the rest of the school year, or until June 30.

The inspector had come and gone so suddenly that I hadn't had time to be nervous, but I knew the official visit was yet to come. In Ontario, at least, that visit can mean the difference between official success and failure.

During the rest of that winter the children and I had many good times together. I discovered that they loved to sing. First we tried only simple songs in unison.

Then one day I taught them a round. They were delighted. "Teach us another one!" they said, and I soon taught them all my rounds of haymow fame, which now came in very handy. One day we learned the lovely song, "All Through the Night." After they'd learned the melody well, I taught some an alto part, and taking the tenor myself, we sang three-part harmony.

"That's the prettiest thing I ever heard," piped up Kenneth.

"I didn't know there was anything but the tune to songs," Roy put in.

"Is that why choirs on the radio sound so good?" they wanted to know.

So we sang often—English songs and French songs, rounds and songs in harmony. I felt quite amply rewarded one day when one of the older girls said gratefully, "Singing is so nice. You're the only teacher that ever taught it to us."

There was one other thing that no other teacher had ever taught them, and that was the Bible. In Ontario at that time the curriculum included what was called "religious education." I took advantage of it by telling a Bible story every morning, for opening exercises. I never ceased to be amazed at how little those so-called Christian children knew about the Bible. There was never a whisper or a stir during those stories, and I, who couldn't remember when I hadn't known the old, old story, was impressed again with its power and fascination.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

I avoided controversial doctrines and tried mainly to show that Jesus was their friend and that they could always go to Him. The morning I told how evil men took the good, kind Jesus and nailed Him to a cross, there were tears even in Kenneth's eyes. How I wanted to ask them to give their hearts to Him, but I knew that in a public school I'd gone as far as I could.

In February as a reward for good behavior the children were allowed to invite their mothers to a valentine party. We had a quiz show, the kids quizzing the mothers; then there was "hot-potato" and a relay. One of the mothers made tea in a big kettle on the square stove; the girls passed sandwiches and cakes the mothers had brought, and as a climax the valentines were given out. I got lots of "I love you's" that day, but the one that made me happiest came from Kenneth.

The early winter twilight was falling as I walked slowly home through the wet snow, feeling more content than I had in weeks. I had received only a few cheap cards, but for the moment, at least, I could ask no more of life.

School began to be a pleasure, but my boarding house was another matter. The only heat in the place came from the kitchen stove. Anywhere else in the house, including my room, I could see my breath. There wasn't much to do during the long winter evenings when the wind howled under the eaves, frosting the windows and molding the sifting snow into long, chiseled drifts.

Coming down to the kitchen, I'd sit with my feet in

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

the oven trying to write a letter on my knee while my soles smoked and my back froze. Mr. Brent would come stamping in from the barn and come over to the stove rubbing his hands. "Writing yer boy friend?" he'd chuckle.

The teasing I could ignore, but when he began reading over my shoulder, there was nothing to do but to fold up my letter and go find a book.

My bed had two feather ticks, one to sleep on and the other to cover with. Once I'd climbed into it I sank so far into its depths that all I could see was the ceiling. This was a lovely arrangement for sleeping, but not so good for reading. Turning up the dim oil lamp, I'd try to hold my book with one hand above the banks of feathers. When all feeling left that hand I'd change to the other. When my eyes finally grew numb, I'd blow out the lamp and try to sleep.

I might have changed boarding places, but there didn't seem to be anywhere else to go. I had learned on good authority (my landlady) that boarding the schoolteacher was a tiresome chore that nobody wanted.

As spring came on and little baby animals began arriving, every breakfast became an adventure. One morning there was a little new lamb on a blanket before the fire. Another morning, after I'd been dimly conscious of strange squeakings all night, I came down to find four little piglets in a box on the oven door. Then there was the morning when I came down rather bleary-eyed from too much oil-lamp reading and sat down to my oatmeal without looking to left or right.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

Suddenly I nearly swallowed my spoon at a loud "moo" behind me. It was only a little calf who'd been too cold in the barn. He kept trying desperately to stand up, but on the kitchen linoleum his hoofs would slip and he'd fall flat on his nose, his legs spreading out in all directions. Then would come the frustrated "moo." The musical parade of animals continued all spring with the bleating of lambs and calves, the squeaking of piglets, and last of all the sharp cheep of the chicks and the softer, liquid peeping of the goslings.

Luckily I was able to go home weekends. Every Friday, as I sat in the hotel waiting for the bus, I'd watch Smilin' Jack and wonder when he'd smiled last and what would happen if he did it again. One day, just to make conversation I asked him when the bus left. "Same time as yistedy," he growled, and that was as far as I got.

As a cold March slipped into a balmy April, my spirits rose with the mercury. The first day after spring vacation I felt especially inspired, and as I walked happily to school I felt my full responsibility as fount of knowledge. The words of my normal-school masters kept coming back to me. Nearing the school I noticed the narcissus were out, and I began soliloquizing on the privilege of molding little minds in such peaceful surroundings. "Today," said I, as I entered the schoolroom "will be a new start, I will be firm but kind. I will—"

Suddenly the air was split by a screech like a power saw going through a hard knot. Never mind, it was only little Pansy, whose pigtails were being pulled; but it

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

served to bring me out of the clouds just in time to sort out Ron and Roy, who were bent on maiming each other for life.

With all ethereal thoughts quite flattened, I rang the bell and school began. I guess it must have been during arithmetic period that I began to sense something sinister in the air. A warning inner voice kept saying, "Official visit, remember? The inspector scarcely looked at you before. Official visit, official visit." I tried to forget the disturbing thought, but everything, the rustle of notebooks, the glow of the old square stove, had something ominous about it.

About midmorning I wasn't surprised to hear a sharp knock, and as I had known, it was the inspector. He shook my hand while murmuring something, then making his way to my desk, took out the register and fondled it a while.

The Official Visit! I groaned inwardly. The fact that my presentiment had proved true was no comfort. I looked at the children. They were quite unimpressed. During their troubled past history, I decided, the inspector must have become so familiar to them that now they barely looked up at his arrival.

As noon hour drew near, I noticed that I had forgotten to send the boys for water at recess. They must have water to wash their hands. I glanced at the inspector. He seemed to be listening to hear the grass grow. I got bold and stubborn. Inspector or no inspector, the water must be got. I sent Ronnie, having first adjured him to be *very* quiet and to come back soon. In

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

thirty seconds he came bouncing in, slamming the door. The water pail was nowhere to be seen, and a wild gleam was in his eye.

"Hey, kids! There's a snake out there," he yelled. The class rose as one jack-in-the-box.

"Oh, boy, lemme see it!"

"How big?"

"Kin I kill it?" And Tommy was halfway out the door before I could grab his sweater and draw him gently in.

With calm desperation I quieted them while the inspector smiled an enigmatic smile. Was he thinking, "Boys will be boys," or "What pitiful lack of discipline"?

He went at last, and the withdrawal of the great presence left a vacuum that naughty spirits rushed to fill. Jimmy took a shot at the ceiling with some mysterious device while Sarah Jane wrote all over her scribbler that J. B. loved Q. Z.

The clock finally crawled around to four, and school was over. How sweetly the silence surged on my ears when they had gone. The quiet mixed with the warm sun began to thaw me out a little. Gazing out the window, I noticed the crisp narcissus once more and remembered my morning resolutions about "molding little minds." At that moment all I knew for sure was that I felt pretty moldy myself.

A few days later when the secretary handed me the inspector's report, I feigned indifference and told myself consolingly that I was going to college the next year anyway. But a little nagging voice I couldn't still kept

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

urging, "Wouldn't it be nice to know you'd succeeded, *officially?*"

As for the report it went something like this: "The children are learning fairly well. Most of them are mannerly and well-behaved. On the whole, the school year has been quite successful and . . ."

Simple words, but after the first sensations of chills and distant singing and exploding stars had passed, I gazed at a ragged little birch by the fence and chanted fervently, "Tomorrow will be a new day. I will remember that I'm molding little minds."

One afternoon during the last week of school the secretary overtook me on the way home. "We'd like you to think it over, Miss Nadeau. Wouldn't you come back again? We'll give you \$200 more next year. How about it?"

They were pleasant words to hear. After all, whatever the inspector might say, it was the community's decision that mattered; and it felt very good to be wanted.

"No," I said, feeling a tug at my heart all the while; "I'd really like to stay, but I just have to go on to college."

The last day finally came, and as I waited in the hotel with my last pay in my purse I suddenly realized I had nothing smaller than a \$20 bill to give the bus driver. Smilin' Jack was behind the counter looking grimmer than ever. I hate to ask people to change large bills, especially when they present the gloomy appearance of a Smilin' Jack. Nevertheless I approached

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

the counter. "I'd like a five-cent package of salted peanuts, please," I cooed, with my most fetching smile, and handed him the piece of currency.

He looked at me with the faintest suspicion of a twinkle in his eye. "Guess you'll get along in the world all right," he grunted, and suddenly he didn't look like a horse any more, for he actually smiled.

The Law of the Letter

MY FIRST year of teaching paid my debts, and when school closed I felt terribly self-respecting and honest; but for all my bold promises of going on to college, I didn't have a cent saved toward the next school year. A job for the summer I had to have. But what? I was determined it wouldn't be housework, and I'd had enough of the woodwork shop. My father worked at the local printing press, and impulsively I applied for a job proofreading. To my amazement, though I'd had no experience, I was hired.

I liked the atmosphere of the press from the start. As I opened the door that first morning a deep wave of sound broke over me—the distant whelming roar of the presses, and the steady slap, slap of the belt on the paper cutter, mingled with the endless clinking of the linotypes like someone wearily counting money. The air smelled of paper and ink and big, oily machines, and I felt vaguely proud to be part of all this industry.

Any exalted feeling soon left me, however, when I saw the proofroom. It was a little glass-enclosed place that made me feel like a caged canary when I got inside. In a space perhaps big enough for one desk there were two desks, a bookcase, and a filing cabinet.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

Pearl Browning, the other proofreader, was an old friend of mine. "Well, this is the place," she smiled.

"Before they hired me," I grinned, "they might've asked me my dress size. They took quite a risk. Whatever would we do if I were a size 48 or something?"

Pearl laughed. "I guess that's why they've kept me so long. I'm small enough to fit the proofroom." Pearl was little of stature, all right, but she was large of heart and had a gift for putting people at ease.

"Here," she said, handing me a dustcloth, "we clean house first." That was easy. Turning on my heel, I could reach everywhere without taking a step.

All this time I'd been watching a little window in the wall. A swinging shutter closed it, and a box was tacked under it. Still feeling like a canary, I half expected to see someone come along and throw us in our ration of seed. Just as I finished dusting, the shutter swung and a hand shoved in, not seed, but a great sheaf of papers.

"Those are galleys," Pearl explained, showing me the long strips of paper printed with columns of type. "First you check all divided words in the dictionary. The English language is terrible about that. No rules to speak of. Next read every word and mark all mistakes in the margin." She showed me the proofreader's code, and it reminded me of nothing so much as Babylonian cuneiform.

"You mean I have to learn this?"

"Oh, yes. It's not hard. You'll get used to it."

We sent the corrected galleys out to the linotype

THE LAW OF THE LETTER

operator, and later they came back for checking and rechecking. At last, just before going to press, all galleys came back for a final O.K.

"Now's when I feel I'm signing my life away," Pearl would sigh as she gave the last reading and signed the fateful initials.

Proofreading is queer. You never know what to wish for. If the linotype operator is just learning, you've got to read the proof so carefully that by evening you feel that your eyes must be out on sticks like a lobster's.

On the other hand, when the linotype operator is a wizard you read blithely along until, suddenly, realizing you've found no errors, you stop with a jerk in the middle of the galley. You figure you must have been dreaming, so you read it all again very carefully, only to find it's that pesky linotype operator who's gone and gotten so perfect. You begin hoping for just one error, so that you can feel you're earning your salary. Of course operators like that aren't too common.

I never knew, either, whether to hope that the stuff would be boring or interesting. There were drawbacks both ways. One day Pearl handed me the page proofs of a whole book to read for the very last check up. I sailed through the thing in a couple of hours, thoroughly enjoying myself. It was only a children's book, but after reading things like "electrically welded tubing, y-type frame of $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch O.D. by 19-gauge, carbon steel," etc., etc. for days, even the weakest plot was enough to make me quite dizzy with excitement.

"Finished already?" cried Pearl. "But you can't be.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

Read it again." I had to admit I'd been paying more attention to plot than to errors; and, after all, the main idea in proofreading is to look for errors.

On the other hand, dull copy was like an anesthetic. As we droned along it took all my will power just to keep awake. One hot afternoon after we'd been reading a lamp-parts catalogue all day, I suggested we try adding a little life to it by using expression. Chuckling, Pearl agreed and we proceeded to read the copy as comedy, romance, radio advertising, soap opera, and great stirring drama respectively. It wasn't easy. If you don't believe me just try reading stuff like "No. 242B, 200A, 195, 3 lbs.,—13.95" as if it were great and stirring drama. It's better than black coffee for keeping you awake, and there's nothing much more useless than a sleepy proofreader.

This first proofreading experience, short though it was, came in very handy when I finally got to college, for I was able to get a job as proofreader at the Atlantic Union College Press.

Being the only proofreader around a college can be very embarrassing, especially if you're one of the students. Pearl had told me that the cardinal rule in all printing establishments is: "Follow the copy even if it goes out the window." And that means not one precious word is to be changed by a mere proofreader.

Around a college the copy was often student-edited, and consequently very faulty. I did presume to correct misspellings with Webster to back me, but when the copy did things like misspelling the biology professor's

THE LAW OF THE LETTER

middle name or putting Nova Scotia in the West Indies, I could only cringe and let it go, hoping for the best. Well I knew that a few days hence when the school paper came out, I'd be sure to hear, "Where did you learn *your* geography?"

Most print shops of any size have at least two proofreaders. That makes it possible to be more accurate with one person holding the copy and reading while the other marks the proof. But the college press was so small that I was the only proofreader they could afford. That meant putting copy and proof as close as possible and reading back and forth line for line until my eyes felt as if I'd been watching a tennis game steadily for a week. Of course I missed serious errors once in a while. There was the time the boss confronted me with an advertising post card that had already gone to press and was at that moment being printed. I had O.K.'d it the day before.

"You mean to say you O.K.'d this?" he asked, pointing out a glaring error.

I had to admit I had. I was the only proofreader.

"We've already printed two thousand of them," he groaned, and I wouldn't have blamed him if he'd thrown me into the folder. But he was a kind man. He didn't even fire me.

What really saved my eyes were all the other jobs in the shop. There wasn't enough proofreading to keep me busy all the time; so I was sent from job to job all around the plant. That was the way I happened to know about the new folder they bought for the bindery

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

department. If ever there was a machine with a recalcitrant attitude, that folder was it. The first day the men set it up, we put some circulars through and all stood around enchanted, watching the sheets go in one end and after passing under and over many intricate rollers, come out smoothly at the finish in slick, folded piles.

"Isn't she a honey?" the foreman beamed.

"Sure is," all the boys agreed.

I felt the calluses along my forefinger. "Goody," I exulted. "No more folding by hand."

Maybe my remark offended it, but whatever the reason, that machine suddenly hunched itself, gnashed its teeth, and started tearing those circulars to shreds. The foreman sprang forward and switched off the power. Then he patted and soothed the brute, murmuring all the while, but he couldn't persuade it to fold another sheet that day.

When I came to work the next afternoon, I asked, "How is it?" And everyone knew what I meant.

"Been goin' smooth as oil all morning," smiled the foreman. That did it. The machine shuddered and shook and started chewing up paper again.

"Maybe it's hungry," said one of the boys, but the foreman just looked disgusted.

I was taking psychology that year and suggested that the poor folder was probably a frustrated confetti machine, and that we ought to call in a psychiatrist. But no one would listen to me.

After more caressing, adjusting, and patting, the foreman finally prevailed upon the thing to fold the



That brute of a machine suddenly hunched itself, gnashed its teeth, and started tearing those circulars to shreds.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

rest of the stuff for that day. But that was the trouble. You could never tell when it was going to fold and when it wasn't—a real prima donna, that machine. They called in experts, but to the day I left, it was still temperamental.

During Christmas holidays I was asked to help on the gang stitcher, a dreadful invention that puts rack and thumbscrew to shame as a means of torture. It's a T-shaped machine used to staple pamphlets. The stapling machine itself is the cross on the T, and the stem of the T is a long moving bar with several places along it where operators hang folded pages. A little device gathers the pages together evenly. Then the last operator puts on the cover, and the whole pamphlet goes through the machine and is stapled. Our machine had places for three sheets to be evened, but since the pamphlet we were doing that day had four sheets, one operator had to even his own sheets.

Quite innocently I chose to sit in that extra place and soon learned that, until that moment, I'd never really known what trouble could be. If I failed to even my pages I was supposed to yell, and pressing a button, the foreman stopped the whole machine while I evened those pages. The four other operators waited patiently and were quite sweet about the delay for the first two or three times, but as I got more nervous, I began stopping things every few minutes. The air became pretty tense, and I broke out in a cold sweat. That made the pages stick to my hands, until finally, losing my nerve completely, I let a bad one go through. Of

course, that only made matters worse, for when the boss found it all unevenly stapled he shook his head and chewed his lip, and I turned hot and cold and prickly all over.

Some of the girls liked the gang stitcher, but as far as I was concerned, there's a limit to what the human system can endure. Luckily the job lasted only two days, and I went back to the peaceful boredom of proofreading. Any more of that job and they would have found me some morning, my eyes gleaming, my hair snow white, ax in hand, sitting on the strewn bones of the once proud gang stitcher as I fiendishly chewed up the pamphlets. Yes, I know I quit that job just in time.

There were many other harmless little jobs I did around the shop like sorting metal slugs, putting away type, sweeping, and punching out the holes in cardboard washers. Those cardboard washers were wonderful as occupational therapy, for we could talk while we worked; but no one ever seemed to know what they would be used for. I'll never forget how, as we sat punching out washers, my friend Dotty would tell me the latest stories they'd studied in Survey of English Literature. That's why I'll always associate Keats's "Eve of Saint Agnes" with sitting in the dark, barny bindery while wintry drafts played about our ankles.

But of all the jobs I ever had in any print shop, proofreading taught me the most. Besides a certain degree of mental discipline that I never got from geometry, I

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

also learned that a "caret" is not a vegetable, and that *a cappella* has two p's and two l's.

Then, too, there's a certain satisfaction in having attended the birth of a book. When I later saw a book I'd proofread, as it stood all straight and neat in its new jacket, I had somewhat the feeling of the old family doctor who comes to the grown man and says, "I attended your birth, young man. I looked you over to see that you were O.K., and I signed your birth certificate."

Hoist the Sales

ALONG with mud, maple blooms, and budding romances, early spring brings to many Adventist campuses an invasion of quick-stepping, broad-smiling gentlemen known as publishing secretaries. A publishing secretary is the world's greatest optimist, for he believes that anybody can sell anything. All he wants you to sell is books, of course, but as one great sage has remarked, "If you can sell books you *can* sell anything."

The spring I was seventeen I religiously attended every meeting of what is known as the "colporteurs' institute," or what today would more likely be called a "salesmanship workshop," held at our school. The air was electric with faith, optimism, and the promise of high adventure, and before the first meeting had closed, I had determined to try my luck at selling during the coming summer.

It was the thing to do. At least a fourth of the students from my academy were going. This student selling aimed at earning a scholarship. The arrangement, in those days, was that if the student worked faithfully for four hundred hours, the publishers, the school, and the denominational conference organization agreed to

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

give a credit bonus usable in attending a Seventh-day Adventist school. With the selling commission plus this bonus, students were often able to earn enough to pay their school expenses for a year.

For those who had no aptitude for selling, the publishing secretary had one last argument. "It's a wonderful experience," he'd say; "really, a priceless experience." And he'd go on to prove it, piling one case history upon another until we all believed him. I believed him then, and I believe him now, for I've proved his statement true by my own experience.

My summers at selling were not always a glowing success financially. I sometimes even ended by paying for the privilege, but I wouldn't have missed the experience for any number of gold-plated uncles who might have put me through school painlessly.

As I see it, canvassing, especially when you're selling Christian books, is a course in character. I think of those doors, miles of them as they stretch ahead through a whole summer. Every door is a page that turns to teach you something. No two persons get their lessons in the same order, but the lessons are there: patience, poise, alertness, perseverance, and, most of all, faith in God.

The day is toward evening. You're dusty, hoarse, and weary, and all day you've sold nothing. "Please, dear God," you plead, "help me to sell a book this time."

And somehow, in spite of your blunderings, He touches a heart, for a hard customer suddenly says, "Well, all right. I guess it is a good book. I'll have one."

HOIST THE SALES

Maybe you're working in territory remote from towns. Grocery stores are scarce and restaurants nonexistent. It's one o'clock, and yet there isn't a sign of dinner.

"Please, Father, I'm hungry. Would you lead me to a good dinner somewhere?"

And a few doors later a kind woman says, "We're just sitting down to eat. Won't you stay and have dinner?"

Every day, along each dusty road, before each house you're buoyed up by the thought: "Maybe this is the house. Maybe at this very next door will be someone who needs to find God. Dear Lord, please lead me to someone I can help, and give me words to say."

And the grateful tears in an invalid's eyes as you read to her from God's word tell you that once more your prayer has been answered.

Doors, doors, doors—a whole summer of them. But the worst door of all, the most bewildering, terrible door I ever knocked on while selling was, of course, the first.

I started working in the city of Moncton in New Brunswick where a large percentage of the people are French-speaking. The field superintendent, Mr. Wimer, had insisted that I try to sell a few books by myself first. That way—so his theory went—I'd know how to ask intelligent questions when he came to demonstrate selling. I was to sell *The Modern Medical Counselor* and the book called *Bible Readings*. At the institute weeks before I had carefully memorized the correct

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

approach. Brisk efficiency seemed to be the keynote: Run briskly up the steps, knock briskly on the door, step back three brisk paces, and stand waiting with a brisk smile of anticipation spread on your happy countenance.

I thought of all this as I wobbled along, my legs feeling about as brisk as boiled spaghetti, my face frozen stiffly in a frightened mask. "Let me see now—'Good morning, Mrs. Jones.'" Here I practiced a winning smile. "I'm making Christian calls and—'" A sickening wave of loneliness and fear swept over me. "Dear Lord, give me courage," I whispered, and as I looked up, suddenly, there before me loomed that First Door.

If I'd known for a certainty that there was a tiger behind it, I couldn't have felt weaker. The way I lagged as I climbed the steps was anything but brisk. "Mr. Wimer wants me to ask intelligent questions," I thought bitterly, eyeing the doorbell with suspicion. "For one thing, how do you stop your knees from knocking?" I pushed the button and somewhere an angry buzz reverberated. I waited while my every impulse begged me to run; then my conscience made me push the button again. "Three times," we'd been told. After my third ring, I began to think my fervent wish might be realized and no one would come, but just as I was starting away a woman opened the door. She had her coat and hat on and was trailed by several children.

"I—I'm making Christian calls in the neighborhood," I gulped, "and—and I'd—I'd like to—"

"I'm making calls, too," she said firmly, and, shutting



"I'm making calls, too," she said firmly and walked right past me followed by all the children, who stumbled over me.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

the door, she walked right past me, followed by all the children, who stumbled over my feet.

A stone wall edged the walk, and when the last child pushed me a little in passing I simply dropped down on the wall to catch my breath. I laughed a little, partly from relief and partly at all the absurd fears my mind had built up. "I may yet live to return," I giggled. "Come to think of it, the mortality rate for canvassers is pretty low." Walking on, I found myself not exactly confident maybe, but at least rational.

My next few rings weren't answered, and I was beginning to wonder if I'd ever get a chance to use my carefully memorized sales talk. Would my superintendent believe me? "You know, Mr. Wimer, it's a funny thing, but I walked three miles and didn't find a soul at home."

At the next house I went around to the side and had scarcely knocked when the door was flung open by—I'm sure—the world's original human thundercloud. She was a big woman who stood with feet planted solidly apart, arms akimbo, and a look on her face that made me feel she'd caught me in her jam pot.

"I—I—I'm making Christian calls—" I stammered.

"*Je ne comprends pas l'anglais*," she snapped, as her hand moved toward the door.

What little presence I had left, sprang to life. Without pausing to think of grammar I blurted, "*S'il—s'il vous plait, madame, j'aimerais vous parler de—de—*" What I was going to "*parler*" about I couldn't have said for large sums of money, but I didn't have to finish.

HOIST THE SALES

I've never seen such a transformation in a face. It lit up like a Roman candle.

"Entrez, mademoiselle, entrez," she smiled, stepping aside and bowing me in. Once inside, I tried again. *"J'ai un livre ici que vous—que—"*

She motioned me to follow her and led me to a bedroom where a young woman was sitting holding a baby.

"Do you speak English?" I asked desperately.

"Yes, what is it?"

"Well, it's just this book I wanted to show you," I blundered in relief, and, opening my sample book, I almost fell into the chair beside her. "You'll like this," I puffed. "The part on child care is wonderful."

I emphasized the baby section and was quite amazed after a few minutes to hear her say, "Yes, I think I'll have one of those."

I struggled with my feelings a space. I wanted terribly to appear a veteran of many sales. "Which binding would you prefer?" I finally managed calmly, "There's the cloth at \$8.50 or this washable keratol—"

"Oh, I'll take the best, of course."

"I'm sure that's wise," I purred, dazedly writing her name on the wrong sheet in my order pad.

I don't remember too much more about that morning. Some dim impressions remain of floating along from house to house. There were several rainbows complete with large pots of gold. At any rate, I arrived home at noon feeling quite sure that this summer of selling would be one long, happy triumph.

I fell from that high ecstasy soon enough, of course.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

There were many more moments when I felt that selling—selling anything, but especially books—was even worse than picking potato bugs had been.

Fortunately, I stayed with my aunt Marjory that summer. She was plump and jolly, and her succulent apple pies were very comforting to come home to after a weary day of beating my knuckles as well as my head against hard objects. Most of all I could always count on her common sense when I came home feeling sorry for myself.

I remember coming in one evening, my spirits very soggy.

"Take a good look," I sighed. "Do I look crazy to you?"

Aunt Marjory grinned, and kept on dishing the soup. "No more than usual. Why?"

"Well, there was this woman this afternoon, quite young. She had a little baby, and seemed very interested in the book. Finally she said she'd love to have it but that her husband would never hear to it. I offered to come back at suppertime to show it to him, and she agreed, but she kept saying he'd never allow her to have the book.

"At six I was there and started to show her husband the book. He was one of those smart aleck fellows, always wisecracking, but I finally got him to listen. Before long he shouted out to the kitchen to ask her if she really wanted one, and I reached for my order pad. But then—you'll never believe it—she came storming in pale as death and just furious. She fairly screeched at

HOIST THE SALES

me. 'I never wanted that book. I never wanted that book. You get out of here; go on, get out.'

"There was nothing to do but pick up my stuff and leave. Now what do you suppose ailed her?"

"Just jealous," said Aunt Marjory. "Just mad because you managed to talk her husband into something. Now, forget it. Soup's on!"

I worked in the suburbs of the city of Moncton that summer and met many strangely diverting people. There was Amelia, a French widow with five children. I found her little house at the end of a very long lane. After I'd shown her the book, she smiled so that two deep dimples dented her heavily rouged cheeks. "Well, you know my 'usban' 'e is dead, and I like to 'ave dis book, but I 'ave no money. De cité dey pay—what you call—relief? Ten dollar a week. Not much—no?"

"You have no money at all?"

"No, but only if I could get some work—" she shrugged.

"Well, let's not give up yet. Can you do housework?"

She said she could, and I told her I'd see what I could find. "If you work one or two afternoons a week," I planned, "you can pay me—say—\$3 a week and get the book that way."

Her face brightened, and she agreed. Thus it came about that Amelia was soon doing ironing two afternoons a week for a friend of Aunt Marjory, and every week I collected her \$3 until one joyful day I was able to deliver the book.

Not far from my aunt's home was a tiny house I'd

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

often passed, idly wondering who lived there. In the yard one day I saw a man who looked familiar. Where had I seen him—the tall, rangy figure, the brush pile of hair, the jutting jaw? Then he looked up, and I remembered. When we had lived on that isolated farm surrounded by woods, next to the bears, the Dinsmores had been our closest neighbors. But where were all the children? Not in that tiny house, surely.

Just then Mr. Dinsmore saw me and ambled over, saying heartily, "Well, if it ain't one of the Nadeau girls. Where've you folks ben?" And putting out a huge paw, he engulfed my hand almost to the elbow while he proceeded to pump my arm and drone on endlessly about "the good ol' days," "my, how you've growed," and "how hard the winters used to be."

My arm I was willing to sacrifice, but what bothered me most was the way he kept shifting his quid of tobacco and spattering me while he talked. Finally, I got my arm back, and he led me to the tiny house. Six of his children were still at home. They were all large, boisterous teen-agers who came galumphing into the parlor as soon as I arrived. Fearful that the house might burst at the seams, I took out my sample book and began to talk just to keep things quiet. We were all sitting around the walls of what they called the "sitting room," but it should have been called the "standing room," for when we sat down our knees met in the middle.

These poor people were friendly and interested, but when I looked at the walls, papered with newspapers,

HOIST THE SALES

the bare, rough floor, and the scanty furniture, I knew better than to expect a sale. That presentation I chalked up to missionary work.

On the same street as the Dinsmores' place was another small, unpainted house that was never quiet. Any time you passed you could hear roars of agony, slamming doors, and often the tinkle of breaking glass. Not knowing what to expect, I gathered up courage one day and knocked at the door. Though there wasn't a washtub in sight, the woman who appeared reminded me of one of those specters bent over a washboard that you see pictured on temperance posters. She pushed back a strand of hair and motioned me in. There seemed to be children everywhere, toddling, preschool, and school age. They screamed and fought, battering their way through that poor little shanty while the floor shook. Their mother sighed and sank into a chair. If there had ever been any furniture of consequence, it had long before been kicked into sawdust. Just a few broken chairs remained, and I carefully sat down near the wall to keep out of the way.

"My, how many children do you have?" I shouted above the din.

"Fifteen, but dere's only twelve 'ome now."

"I'm sure with all these children," I yelled, "you'll appreciate—"

The sound of cracking wood reached our ears, and a loud wail came from somewhere.

"Jean-Paul, *qu'est-ce que tu fais?*" my prospect screamed.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"As you may know," I hollered, "it was Dr. William Osler who said—"

The wailing grew louder. "Marie-Louise, *prends* Jean-Paul, *puis vas dehors—vite.*" The door slammed, and the wailing faded.

"Of course, the best way this book can—"

The front door swung open with a bang, and three children raced in chasing one another. "*Ferme la porte,*" their mother yelled. Someone slammed the door. There was a moment of comparative silence, and I opened my mouth to try once more, but the woman held up her hand. "*Ne dites rien de plus, mademoiselle,*" she said. It was the first time I'd heard her speak when she wasn't shouting. "I no spik de Angleesh. I no read."

I stood up to go just as a three-year-old came running in and stumbled over my briefcase. This sent him sprawling, but big sister, who was standing by, snatched him up by the collar. "Louis-Joseph, *prends garde,*" she shrieked as he howled protest.

Gathering up my things, I left. In the street a truck rumbled by, followed by the clinking jangle of the milkman's wagon, but the quietness was, nevertheless, soothing.

One day I started out to explore a new road, and had not walked long, when on one far edge of town I came upon the new, very untidy suburb of Highland View. This discovery proved to be quite an intoxicating experience. There were a few decent houses, painted and solid-looking, but for the most part the dwellings

HOIST THE SALES

were shacks, covered with flapping tar paper and surrounded by littered, weed-grown yards. The people, however, were friendly, and there was one thing they all had in common. Everyone seemed fascinated with my book. At almost every house, people gathered around as I showed the medical book, and they ohed and ahed in appreciation.

"My word, that's a great book, ain't it?" or "Oh, what's that?" as I paged by an illustration, "scarlet fever, you say?"

"Yeah, that's real natural. My aunt had it and that's just the way she looked."

"How much are them books?"

"You gettin' one, Joyce? Yeah, you can bring me one."

Oh, it was a very heady experience. I came winging home that evening with a light heart and ninety dollars' worth of orders. There was just one thing that kept me from actually singing aloud: I had only five dollars in deposits.

The publishing house allowed us to take orders without deposits, but always warned, of course, that it wasn't wise. Delivery day proved them right, for most of those Highland View orders turned out to be nothing more than wishful thinking on the part of the customers. But to this day, I maintain that the exhilaration of taking all those orders was worth the disappointment.

Every night I gathered together my report blanks and counted up the hours I'd put in. Slowly, very slowly, they mounted, until one day I carefully added

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

up my time and triumphantly wrote 400. Then I looked at my orders. I hadn't done anything fabulous, but I'd earned enough to pay my tuition for one more school year.

I didn't feel much regret at leaving canvassing. In fact, realizing that the long hours were done and some money earned, I was almost dizzy with relief. I couldn't help thinking of the man who was asked why he kept knocking his head against the wall, and had replied, "It feels so good when I stop." That exactly described the way I felt about my first summer of canvassing.

More seriously, of course, I was grateful for the hard experience. I'd been selling books to others, but the summer had itself been a book of experience to me. I was glad I'd tried, but my determination, as I gathered up my order books and packed for school was, "Never again!"

"Buy of Me Gold"

WHEN I said "Never again," I meant it. Back at school on registration day after my first summer of canvassing, I met my old friend Lynne in the library. "Well, how was it?" she asked.

"A wonderful experience," I smiled, and then added, "to have *had*. I'm glad I went, but I'm gladder to be back, and if ever you hear me speak of trying this selling business again, I give you full permission to throw every one of these at me." And I indicated the volumes of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

The way I felt then, I was sure I was perfectly safe. But every spring when colporteur institute time came, I'd hang around the chapel door until someone began telling canvassing stories. Then I'd go in. It was pretty hard to keep quiet, and sometimes I'd even tell some experiences of my own. Each spring my "never again" became a little weaker. Finally, in the spring of 1947, I broke down altogether. Four years had passed since my summer of canvassing, including my year of teaching, and I was finishing all that my home junior college had to offer. The time had come to go to senior college, and canvassing seemed to offer the best chance to earn the most in the shortest time. So it was with a kind of

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

“quiet desperation,” as Thoreau put it, that I approached Carl Wessman, publishing secretary for the Maritime Provinces, who signed me up to canvass in Lunenburg County on the south shore of Nova Scotia.

Thus it was that by July my canvassing partner, Phyllis Therrault, and I were settled with the hospitable Corkum family in Pleasantville, Nova Scotia. I say “settled,” but more truthfully we made the Corkums’ house our headquarters, often going out for a week and returning for the weekend. We had little money to spare for food and lodging; so we appreciated the room the Corkums kindly let us have free. Out on the road, we usually stayed with the farmers and fishing people wherever we found ourselves at nightfall, for hotels were scarce and expensive.

Not a day of that summer was dull, but one Friday afternoon in July as we cycled back to Pleasantville, we stumbled upon the most interesting adventure of the whole summer. We’d come over five miles on a rough dirt road, and the sun was biting hot on our arms. When we reached the top of a long hill, a cool gust of wind fanned us, and we stopped to rest. The green hill on which we stood sloped down to the village of Lahave, with its white cottages sprinkled along the shore line. Beyond sparkled the dark blue reaches of the Lahave River. As it widened out to Dublin Bay, several scrubby islands dotted the horizon. Their bony shoulders thrust above the water, they seemed to sit waist deep, hunched and brooding in the sunlight.

“Snap out of it,” said Phyllis. And I returned to

reality with a start. "What are you dreaming about?"

"Those islands. Don't they fascinate you?"

"You mean good territory? I do see some houses out there."

I looked again, and this time I, too, noticed the light glinting on houses here and there. "But of course," I said, "I bet those people have never seen a real live canvasser."

"You know, they say fishermen have been making money lately. They're supposed to have piles of it hidden in their mattresses." Phyllis pushed back her damp bangs. "They could probably use *The Modern Medical Counselor*."

"Let's go, Phyl."

"You mean swim? And what'll we do with our bikes?"

"The bikes aren't what I'd worry about. I keep remembering what that old lighthouse keeper told us about sharks and strong currents. But seriously, I think we might ask around and find a way to get out to those islands."

Phyllis's answer was lost as she coasted down the hill ahead of me, but I knew she was as eager to go to the islands as I. We had to ride on home then, and though we made inquiries that weekend, we weren't able to go to the islands immediately, for the next week we had to deliver some books, and the following week I had bike trouble. Finally, three weeks after we'd decided to go, we found a fisherman who planned to take his motorboat down the river. He agreed to take

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

us along free and let us off at one of the islands. Monday morning we waited at the little wooden river pier in the gray, misty dawn. Soon we heard a motor sputtering and our boat drew up. Our bicycles were placed in the middle of the little craft, almost filling it up. We crawled under the tarpaulin that covered the bow to get out of the fine drizzle that had begun to fall; and our fisherman, who didn't seem to notice the drizzle, just had room to tend the motor at the stern.

Under the tarpaulin it was cramped and dark, and everything smelled of fish. The motor made the boat shiver while the roar, the vibration, and the motion of the waves made me rather sleepy. I closed my eyes and idly dreamed that I'd been thrown into a cement mixer with a few old fish. Opening my eyes, I peered out from our shelter. There was nothing to see but gray water, gray sky, and, as we reached midstream, gray lines of shore on either side. After two hours the gray shore lines faded, it began raining harder, and a thick fog closed in as we pushed out into the bay. Minutes later, a dark shape loomed out of the mists, and our pilot shouted above the motor that we had reached Bell Island.

We sputtered up to a mossy pier, while the waves from our boat slapped the piling. The crude ladder made wavering reflections in the oil-black water and shook a little as we scaled it. Then the boatman handed us our bicycles, and as we tugged them up onto the pier beside us, he melted away into the fog, his motor roaring. We watched him go a little sadly, for he seemed



The boatman handed us our bicycles, and as we tugged them up onto the pier beside us, he melted away into the fog.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

our last link with the earth. In this strange world of water, the rickety black pier was the only solid thing in sight.

Off to our right there did seem a vague shadow of something solid, but we couldn't tell what it was. "Looks like we're in the middle of the Atlantic," said Phyllis.

"With no rubbers, either," I said; "and it looks like monsoon season's setting in," for the drizzle had become a steady downpour. We moved in under a roof that covered part of the pier, but it was far from weather-proof. Without such luxuries as umbrellas or rubbers, we felt quite forlorn at the prospect of the soaking we were sure to get. But we'd been traveling all summer with only the clothes on our backs. Phyllis was fortunate to have a raincoat now.

In our bicycle tool kits, along with a wrench, an oil can, and a jar of cold cream to save our sandblasted complexions, we had stuffed our bathing suits, for swimming offered our only chance for a bath. This was all we'd brought besides our samples.

"Well, here we are," I announced.

"Where?" asked Phyllis.

"That's a good question," I laughed.

The false roof was dripping all around us. Phyllis shivered as one big drop fell on the back of her neck.

I remembered my mother's favorite saying. "Cheer up," I said, feeling quite heroic, "the worst is yet to come." Off in the fog somewhere a dog began to bark.

"Hark, captain, land is near," Phyllis giggled, as we gingerly pushed our bicycles over the dank boards. Just

then a tuft of grass and some real land appeared at the end of the wharf, and the dog, a friendly collie, came toward us. To our relief, behind him on the shore of an inlet a neat white house materialized.

"I guess we've come back to earth," I said, but inwardly I wondered what people in such surroundings would be like. Would they be quite human?

In the pouring rain, we parked the bikes beside the house and knocked on the door. The woman who let us in was no monster, but looked rather sweet and gentle, as though she might well pose for a Mothers' Day illustration. "Why, you poor girls," she cried. "Where have you come from in this weather? Do come in and dry off." And she led us, dripping wet, over her polished blue linoleum to the glowing old wood stove.

We told her of our work, and, all the while, I noted her kindly face and neat hair and dress, wondering how she came to live in such a cheerless place.

"All of us hereabouts are fishermen mostly," she said when I asked. "The scenery's pretty here in good weather, but the sun don't shine much. We haven't seen sunshine now for three weeks."

I remembered the first time we'd seen the islands in the sun out in the bay, and I realized that that had probably been their last fine day.

Mrs. Bell liked our books at once and ordered *Bible Readings*, paying cash. With this order to encourage us, we knew that, rain or shine, we had to be on our way. We asked about a road.

"I'm afraid it isn't much good for bicycles," she said.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"You'd better leave them here and walk. The island isn't very big."

We set forth once more, leaving our bikes by the house. Wading through a much overgrown path, we drenched our shoes as the rain continued to soak our clothes. At the center of the island, we came upon a slightly better trail winding through the low trees and scrub. It was about four feet wide and capriciously strewn with big rocks and puddles.

Our shoes were already as wet as though we had swum the length of the river, so we splashed merrily along, not missing a puddle. With the rain soaking our hair and streaming down our faces, we found it hard to keep our eyes open. The fog grew thicker as we went on, as though the sky had let a few clouds fall to smother this one small spot of earth.

Suddenly the road dropped as we came to a granite step three feet down. We were beginning to see why this thoroughfare wasn't recommended for bicycles. As yet we had met no one and were beginning to feel that the first house had been a mirage, when we came to a clearing. We could feel the space beyond the fog and hear the soft lapping of a sheltered inlet. Another house showed dim outlines through the fog.

We looked at each other a little doubtfully. "You look like something washed up by the sea," Phyl said.

"You can't talk, since you're the one with the rain-coat," I retorted, trying to squeeze some of the water from my dress. "Besides, you look kind of waterlogged yourself."

Upon knocking we were admitted by a hospitable woman whose house was poor but tidy. We looked a little ruefully at the puddles that seemed to follow us into the kitchen. In the back of my mind was a picture of the snappy, prepossessing colporteur we'd been told about at colporteurs' institute, but luckily these fisher-folk, and even the children, seemed to see nothing unusual in two bedraggled girls.

Though this woman was too poor to buy any books, as we left she kindly offered me a raincoat, a shiny black rubber outfit, that scarcely met around me and gave me the same general lines as a stovepipe. But I was very glad to have it, and of course, true to the perversity of all weather everywhere, the rain began to let up as soon as I put it on.

At each house we learned more about the islands. There was no electricity whatsoever, not even telephone connections with the mainland. The road we'd found was the only road; hence there were no cars. But everyone owned a boat. As we heard of the desperate straits the islanders sometimes found themselves in in time of sickness, we became convinced that our medical book with its hydrotherapy treatments and first-aid instruction could be for them a lifesaver, and that conviction gave us sales power.

Following the shore of the inlet, the road was often nearly lost when the bank became very steep. We followed one faint side path up the bank and found we had come to the post office, a small table in one of the back kitchens. The postmistress told us how her little

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

boy had almost bled to death from a cut in his foot the previous summer, and she gladly gave Phyllis her order for the *Medical Counselor*.

We clambered on around the bank. There was no space for lawns; bushes and scrub evergreens were all that would grow among the bare rocks, and most of the houses crouched behind the brave little spruces that clung to the ledges. Here and there, wherever a bit of earth could be found, were tiny gardens.

At noon we climbed to a house on a path so steep that steps had been cut in the rock to make a crude stairway. With customary island hospitality the housewife asked us to have dinner. The food was plain—cabbage, potatoes, fish. There were very few fresh vegetables on the islands, we noticed, even in summer.

The rain stopped completely after dinner, but fog continued in the low places. Shortly we came to a gray, weatherworn house planted about with a few pathetic flowers. A leathery-faced man came to the door.

"The wife's sick," he told us. "She's got asthma terrible bad. I got to look after her, so I can't work out much."

The house was clean, but rather bare. In a dark little room was the sick woman, wheezing for breath. Propped up with pillows, she leaned against the high headboard of her bed. Her eyes and cheeks were hollowed, and though she looked very old, I concluded she was only middle-aged. Every breath she took was a long, gasping struggle. I knew very well that these poor people could never afford our medical book; so I

"BUY OF ME GOLD"

tried to explain some treatments that might be helpful.

"But why," I pleaded, "don't you get off this island? It's much sunnier on the mainland. If I saw the sun as seldom as you do, I'd be sick, too."

"Well, you see, we can't," the man spoke hopelessly. "Every cent I get has to go for the doctor. This here medicine costs \$5 a bottle. We just don't have the money."

"'Silver and gold have I none,' " I thought, "but the gold of the gospel." Then I spoke to them of that promised home made new where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying." We bowed our heads and prayed, and for a moment I knew the fear of death was driven away by the Prince of Peace. As we rose to go, the poor woman struggled to speak, but had no breath to spare. Instead, she grasped my hand tightly, and her death-haunted eyes glowed with tears as she tried to thank us for our visit. Such experiences made all hardships worth while.

After we'd visited the last house on the far side of the inlet, it was late afternoon. We began to wonder where we would stay that night, but we were learning real dependence on God. Looking at the low-hanging clouds, I said, "God is here when we want Him, Phyl. Right beside us, really. We're doing His work, and we have nothing to fear."

Just then we remembered a house back toward the center of the island high on the rocks which we'd passed in the morning, intending to return to later. We clambered back around the bank on the narrow trail,

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

over the road with the puddles and boulders, and, branching off, came finally to the last house on Bell Island.

The genial woman who answered our knock seemed interested in us from the start. After we'd told her what we were doing, she said, "You don't have any place to stay tonight, do you? Well, you just plan to stay with us." She chuckled a little. "Seeing as how the hotels is kinda scarce hereabouts, we usually put up any strangers as come by."

When we started to show our books, she said, "Wait a minute. You'll be here after supper, and I want my old man to see them books."

This house was typical of most of the other island homes. The kitchen was the heart of the house, for in this usually foggy weather the big wood fire was welcome even in summer. The walls were gaily papered, and a few calendars, an almanac, and a kitchen clock completed the decorations.

My dress, after our day's activities, looked as though I'd put it in the wash and then hung it on myself rather than on the line. When I mentioned that I wanted to wash, our hostess gave me a capacious old bathrobe to put on while I scrubbed and afterwards ironed my dress with quaint old flatirons that you heat on the stove in pairs, fastening the handle to one and changing to the hotter one as it is needed.

After a supper of boiled fish, boiled potatoes, and bread and molasses, we sat around the kitchen and talked. I told them of my home in Ontario, and I felt

"BUY OF ME GOLD"

it couldn't have been stranger to them if I'd been describing Ethiopia. They were much more interested when Phyllis told how she helped her father clean fish in her home in Digby. It was plain they thought her a fine, upstanding example of what a daughter ought to be. I was a "foreigner" from Ontario, and they were not so sure about me.

Before climbing the stairs to the little spare room, we showed them our books. They were well impressed with them, ordering both immediately and paying cash.

Phyllis and I climbed the stairs to the little bare room, which seemed so cozy and gracious compared with the wet and fog outside. Before climbing into the high brass bed we flicked quickly through the pages in our order pads, counting in a whisper. "Two, three, . . . five. I have five orders," Phyllis cried gleefully. "That means over fifty dollars."

"And I have six," I said. "The best part about it is that they're more than half paid for already. I don't know whose idea it was, but I'm glad we came to the islands."

The next morning there was no rain, but fog still hung in the hollows and over the water. By the time we'd returned the raincoat and trudged back through the wet undergrowth to Mrs. Bell's, at the first house, to get our bicycles, our feet were soaked once more.

We planned this day to go over and work on the next island. Dorothy Bell, a bright child of ten, was glad to row us over in one of the fishing dories moored in the inlet. Like most fishermen, none of these folk

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

could swim, but they learned to handle oars almost as soon as they could walk. Dorothy was no exception. She pushed the dory out a little, then, hopping up, scrambled spiderlike along the side. With a skillful twist of the oar she turned the boat, and we soon climbed aboard.

The crossing was very short, but the fog made it a singular experience with smooth, opalescent water beneath and a strange world of silver gray surrounding us. Eerie white wisps curled past us as though we had found the heart of a cloud on the very edge of the world. Our little pilot steered as straight as though she were on tracks and rowed us into another inlet. Depositing us on the shore, she left and soon returned with our bicycles.

Dorothy had told us that a short bridge connected this island to the mainland, and we noticed almost immediately that the place was less rocky. There was even a road on which a car might proceed with care; but since the houses were all built facing the water, obviously the sea was the main thoroughfare, the road merely a back alley.

We took fewer orders here. Perhaps their bridge to the mainland gave the people more security than the people of Bell Island, who had to think of rowing their dories across the strait to get medical help.

Most of the morning the road led us through a lightly wooded area where we had to walk through long grass and shrubs to reach the houses. Around one o'clock we came to a clearing where a pleasant field

spread out around a white house. "My, they do have more room here," I said.

"I have a lot of room in my stomach," Phyllis remarked. "I hope somebody asks us to dinner soon. I don't think I'd even refuse corned beef and cabbage."

"You *must* be hungry," I said, "when I think of all the cabbage we've had for the last two days."

The woman who answered our knock was getting dinner, and when we came in she started setting the table. "We're about to eat," she said. "All we're having is corned beef and cabbage, but you're welcome to it."

We accepted with fervent thanks, and were careful not to look at each other, for we knew we were just weary enough that one look exchanged would have set us off in a fit of unrestrained giggling.

After dinner we had just begun to work when a heavy shower started. Thus far that day we'd managed to keep ourselves (except for our feet) fairly dry, and, hoping the shower would pass, we waited at the house where we were calling. The woman had let us in and shown us to chairs; then while we showed our books she walked heavily around the kitchen doing her work automatically without even looking at us. I had noticed a serious air about these islanders. That grim, everlasting battle with the sea was ever with them, but this woman seemed more burdened than the others. We talked a bit while the rain pounded. Then I asked her if she had any children.

"Oh, yes," she said, "but they're all growed up now." And she sighed deeply. "My one boy was drowned last

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

year out by Black Rock. It's a treacherous place. We don't know exactly what happened. He was just found drowned with his face in water in the bottom of his boat. They never found the fellow who was with him." She said this in an even, colorless voice as though all emotion were past.

For several minutes we sat in silence, and I thought of the cruel sea and the mysterious tragedy while the rain coursed down the windowpane. I felt very young and helpless and ashamed of my freedom from care. "It must be hard," I said, "so hard. But we'll never understand God's ways completely, here. Yet, we must trust Him, or all is lost."

She nodded dumbly, as she set her dishes in the cupboard, set a kettle on the stove, or peered out the window.

"I guess the rain's stopped," she said, and we left, then, wishing somehow that we could help.

The trees were taller on this island and the underbrush thick and wet. Strung like beads on the twigs, the raindrops drenched us as we passed and we gave up trying to keep dry. At one spot there seemed to be a slight opening through the trees and a rough path. We decided to follow it and went on clambering over rocks and pushing aside wet branches. In a slight clearing we came upon the most dejected house we had found on the islands. It was built close to the ground with not even a doorstep. Inside, it was damp and dark, and the floor was bare. Ragged clothes hung on the walls, and an old man sat in a corner smoking an ancient pipe.

We'd scarcely said, "How do you do?" when a woman came lumbering in from an adjoining room, wearing big rubber boots. Pushing back her stringy hair, she flashed us a toothless grin. I had my doubts as to her literacy, but we began to show our books.

"Oh, I don't need that there what you call counsel book," cried the woman. "I know everything in that book. Bin a good nurse in my time. Y'kin ask Doc Cannon."

We tried to explain that there might be some new things she didn't yet know, some of the latest medical findings, perhaps, but she would have none of it.

"Probably can't read," I thought to myself, "and she's scared to death we'll find out." Aloud I said, "O.K., we're glad you've been such a fine nurse. You must have done a lot of good. Can you tell us how to reach the bridge?"

That she could and gladly. She ran to pull on her coat, then walked with us through the woods as far as the shore. Here she pointed out a narrow path along the rocks. We thanked her, and she turned to go, waving and grinning widely as she disappeared among the trees.

"Poor soul," I said. "Imagine what her life must be in this place. The only thing I envy her in this climate is her rubber boots."

We now had to creep around the edge of a cliff-bound bay where the rocks had grown smooth under the incessant nagging of the sea, and the crashing waves lifted the slimy yellow rockweed as rhythmically as a

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

heartbeat. More than once we slipped on the slick stones and nearly fell into the surging water. Finally we reached the road again. We went back a little way to the house where we'd left our bicycles, then worked on until we crossed the bridge that connected the island to a long arm of the mainland. That arm was a lovely beach of hard white sand when the tide was out, but only a ridge of sand dune and salt grass when the tide was in; so we hurried to cross on hard sand, as the tide was rising.

At the opposite end of the beach we entered a different world—a world of electricity, telephones, paved roads, and neat resort cottages with their velvety lawns and bright gardens. An hour later the sun broke out in a yellow blaze, and summer was back again, gentle and shimmering.

For the rest of that week we worked along what was called Dublin Shore with every day spanned by blue, limpid skies; but whenever we looked out toward Dublin Bay we saw only a curtain of mist between us and the islands.

Friday afternoon we stopped again on top of the hill overlooking the water. From the sand-swept shore spread the glittering blue waters, and scattered against the horizon were the solitary islands, like shaggy old men quietly drinking in the sunlight.

"Look, Phyl, the islands—they're seeing the sun for the first time in weeks."

At that moment I thought I could see the lonely houses touched with warmth. Perhaps the sun in her

window was lifting that poor mother above the tragedy of Black Rock. Perhaps in the gold of the sunlight that dying woman would be reminded of the gold of the City of God. I thought then of another rocky island and of the prophet who, looking down the years, saw that city. "There shall be no night there," he said, and you can feel the glow that must have warmed his weary heart as the mists of Patmos closed in. "And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light."

"Come on. It's getting late." Phyl's urgent voice woke me to the present.

"Yes, it is getting late," I said, and together we coasted down the long road that curved toward home.

As we rode along, my mind went back to my own past. "Never again . . . never again . . . never again." A loose spoke in my front wheel seemed to mock me as we cycled over the rough road. Yes, "never again" was what I'd promised myself about selling books, but as I thought of the Lahave Islands, how glad I was that I'd broken my promise.

Senior College at Last

I HAD been at college less than two months that night as I sat at my monitor's desk in the second-floor hall of the girls' dormitory looking idly at the letter I held. It was study period for everyone but me. Of course, I could have been studying and I usually would have been, for the girls hardly ever gave me any trouble; but tonight I could only stare past my open psychology book at the fateful letter in my hand.

At that moment I was fighting a wave of self-pity as I remembered my arrival at college. I smiled wryly. What a prepossessing impression I must have made. My hair had been straight, my complexion pale green, and my shabby purse flat. As usual, the long bus ride had made me sick so that the landscape was still moving up and down in a gentle undulating motion, but I had been happy. Quite entranced, I had gazed at the wavering pink brick and the white columns of the girls' dormitory, and, steadying myself against a pillar, I had hugged the rope-tied carboard box that held my belongings, as I had blinked happily at the campus. Dizzy or not, I had found it a shining moment, for after three years of prayer and hard work, I had finally arrived at Atlantic Union College.

SENIOR COLLEGE AT LAST

My summer at selling had netted only enough for books and entrance fees, so that now, besides classes in the morning, I worked at proofreading in the College Press every afternoon and served as a monitor in the girls' dormitory in the evening. It was hard—forty hours of work each week—but I loved it all.

Every month students received a financial statement showing the state of their accounts with the college. It was the first statement of the year that I held in my hand. I looked at the debit column again. "I suppose now I'll have to be leaving," I thought sadly.

The lights blinked once, and I stood up. Time to check rooms. I started down the hall, knocked gently at the first door, and opened it. "Good-night, Jean. Bev there? O.K." That room always smelled of oranges. I wondered if other people noticed the smells of the rooms as I did. Another knock. "Anybody home?" I asked, as a steamy shampoo smell met me. Two heads covered with pincurls popped around the bathroom door. "O.K., kids. Good night." Out in the hall once more, I sniffed like a bloodhound. What was that scent—"Temptation," "My Sin," or "Your Foolishness"? Whatever it was, I was pretty sure I knew whose it was, three doors away. Nita seemed to think that no matter what a girl's faults, all she needed was a haunting perfume to make her as exciting as a three-alarm fire. Another door, and the scent in the hall wasn't strong enough to cover the new smell, which seemed to be compounded of unwashed socks and sardines. Two-three-three. I always smiled as I knocked on Kitty's door. She was

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

from North Carolina, and her accent fascinated me. "Good night, Kitty," I called.

A muffled voice from the closet drawled, "Gid na-a-aht."

When I came to room two-ten, I shivered, for I knew what I'd find. Pushing hard against a strong blast of October wind, I opened the door. As always the window was wide open, and the room was icy. Snug in bed and manicuring her long white hands, her green eyes half closed, was my Jamaican roommate, Noonie. The radio was turned down low, and a large open box of crackers stood by. Noonie loved food, music, and sleep, in that order. She had a heart as big as her dress size, and no one had ever seen her study.

"Well, honey," I grinned as I hauled the window down, "you'd better start appreciating me, for you won't see me around much longer."

Noonie reached for another handful of crackers. "So you're goin' to end it all? What's it goin' to be, missus, sleeping pills or gas?"

"You might at least sound sorry, old thing. The truth is, I already owe this place over \$200, and I can't possibly work any more hours. The day isn't long enough, so I'll have to go home, that's all."

"Not that," Noonie murmured, sitting up and brushing the crumbs off the spread. "Your father will find some money soon, you'll see."

To Noonie, money was a commodity that fathers sent on request. She took a small silk kerchief from the bedside table and tied it around her head, tucking her



"Well, honey," I grinned, closing the window, "you'd better start appreciating me, for you won't see me around much longer."

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

auburn curls under the edge. This, she'd explained, was to keep insects out of her ears, and however many times I reminded her that she was no longer in the tropics, she continued the old habit. Noonie was hard to change. Now she purred sympathetically. "No mattah, you'll find some way, roommate. You just can't go home."

"Well, it's beginning to look as though I will."

At that moment the lights went out, immersing us in darkness. "Oh-oh, I must go make my report," I said, and, feeling for the door, I stepped out and ran down the dimly lit stairway to the dean's office.

It would have been worth coming to college if only to meet Dean Mary McConaughy. She was young, alert, and, in running a dormitory, a first-class diplomat. I remembered a freshman girl at the first of the year who had said, "It's funny about the dean. She makes me want to keep the rules in spite of myself."

Now Mary McConaughy looked up smiling. "Everything quiet tonight?"

"Oh, sure, the girls were fine. I've got my own worries, though." And I went on to tell her my troubles.

She was all sympathy at once. "Of course you won't go home," she said emphatically. "Go get some sleep now, and, above all, don't worry."

"Well, thanks for your sympathy," I said and left rather abruptly, for I felt rather hopeless. "It's all very well for *her* to say 'Don't worry,' " I thought a little bitterly, for I was in no mood for Pollyannas that night.

Noonie was almost asleep when I entered, and I

SENIOR COLLEGE AT LAST

groped about to find my comb and bobby pins. Then sitting up in bed with a glass of water perched on my knee, I put my hair in pin curls while I pondered long and hard. I couldn't work any more than I already was working. That was certain. My dad couldn't spare a cent, and I had no rich relatives. Suddenly the lines of a familiar gospel song came to me:

My Father is rich in houses and lands;
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!

Yes, of course. Why hadn't I asked Him before? And, getting out of bed, I knelt and prayed: "Dear Lord, thank You for bringing me here, and forgive my unbelief. You're the only one who can keep me here, now. You own everything, Lord, and please arrange some way for me to stay here, if it be Your will, for I ask it in Jesus' name." And climbing back into bed, I slept almost immediately.

Next day, I walked slowly back to the dorm from classes. I wanted time to savor it all—classes, friends, the little New England town, now lighted with the jewel colors of autumn. Back across the valleys one of the Lancaster churches lifted its graceful Bulfinch tower above golden trees. Across a low stone wall a maple rustled its scarlet leaves. "Will it be good-by?" I wondered as sudden tears prickled my eyes.

Just then I heard the hum of a car and the crunch of gravel as it slowed down beside me, and I recognized President Jones, a distinguished, graying man, who looked the way I'd always imagined a Senator ought to look.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"May I give you a ride?"

"Yes, of course." I was a little puzzled as to the reason for this honor.

"Lovely day, isn't it," he began. "I've been hearing a little of the trouble you've had lately."

Quickly my mind flicked over my latest activities. I could think of nothing to feel guilty about. "You mean financial?" I asked in a small voice.

"Yes. You owe quite a bill, I understand."

"Yes, I do, over \$200." Oh dear, was he trying to prepare me to be sent home? I didn't dare look at him.

"Well, I just wanted to tell you," he went on, "that there are certain friends of the college who have made some small scholarships available to help out in emergencies such as this. A hundred and fifty dollars will be credited to your account, no strings attached. All we ask is that someday, if you're ever in a position to do so, you'll help some other student through this school."

A little dazed, I sat silent while the car slowed to a stop in front of the girls' dorm. "I—I hope you won't think me ungrateful," I finally managed. "I'm just a little—well—dazed. I know I'll be able to manage now, and all I can say is that it really is an answer to prayer."

The president smiled and drove away, as I started up the walk.

"Dear, kind, heavenly Father," I whispered, "thank You for friends." And I could think of nothing more to say. But I didn't have to, for I knew He understood.

I'll Try It ! What Is It ?

OF ALL the depressing occupations known to man, from grave digging to cleaning fish, I know of none worse than job hunting, and, especially in the winter, job hunting is not too far removed from the tortures of the Inquisition.

Every morning with folded newspaper in hand you step from the nine o'clock bus into the gray city slush knowing you'll have no permanent shelter until you step on that bus again at five o'clock. The gutters are littered with gum papers and candy wrappers; and cold, damp gusts blow up your sleeves. Tickling your face as they fall, the big, wet snowflakes melt on your hair and soon run in wet rivulets down your forehead. You call at the first address, a large hardware store. "Clerk wanted; no experience needed," the ad says. A big man whom you take to be the manager is standing outside the door with his hands behind his back. The look in his eye makes you feel he built the place himself from a few stray bricks and a handful of toothpicks.

"I'm interested in that job you advertised in the paper," you bleat timidly.

"Sorry, lady, that's been taken," he barks, and, turning his back, he opens the door and goes in. The puff

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

of warm air that escapes from the open door only makes you more conscious of your misery. An icy drop from the eaves splatters in your face, and, sighing deeply, you step into a doorway to scan the paper for the next want ad. That's the way it is, day after day.

The winter of 1949 I spent job hunting. The previous summer I had married John Bohner, a fellow student and business major whom I had met at Atlantic Union College. "Of course, I'll have to finish college," I had said before I even gave a thought to a wedding dress.

Jack had smiled fondly. "And I want a wife who feels that way about college," he had said, so the question of education had been settled from the start. Determined though we were to let nothing stand in the way of graduating, we had decided, soon after our wedding in August, to stay out of school a year and work to pay our debts.

In September we had begun teaching church school in Syracuse, New York, where I had the first four grades, and Jack had grades five to nine. He had managed well enough, but I had soon found twenty-two pupils with a large percentage of first-graders very different from my little country school. All that cutting of paper and coloring of pictures, wiping of noses, and the leading to the toilet were simply not for me, and I had resigned at Christmas. Then had begun the wearisome search for some other kind of work.

I remember starting out quite hopefully one cold morning to answer a rather vague ad that said, "Young

I'LL TRY IT! WHAT IS IT?

women wanted to make survey in city area. No experience necessary." The address turned out to be a very nearly empty room in one of the big office buildings. Almost too promptly a loud voice said "Come" to my knock.

Behind a desk sat a man wearing a checkered suit and, on the back of his head, a fedora.

"I'm interested in—" I began.

"Sure, sure, our survey. Well, here's all ya gotta do. You take this card. It has a list of magazines—you know them all—*Saturday Evening Post*, *Ladies' Home Journal*. Like I say, all ya gotta do is go up ta the house, ring the bell, and ask the lady ta check her favorites. Then you get her name an' address. That's all ya gotta do for \$25 a week. Then we send another fella after ta collect.

"Collect?"

"Sure. He tells 'em they subscribed to these magazines and they gotta pay, see?"

By the look on my face he could tell that I didn't "see."

"Well, of course, ya gotta razzle-dazzle 'em a little," he added.

I moved toward the door. "I don't think I'd be interested, thanks."

"Well, what did ya come for?" he shouted after me. That was precisely what I was asking myself.

One day a big downtown bank advertised for a clerk, "no experience necessary." That last phrase was very important to me. For in that city it seemed that,

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

in spite of all the jobs I'd held, none of my past experience now did me any good. One doesn't usually start teaching in midwinter; no one wanted proofreaders; I couldn't type; and housework I didn't want.

The day I went to the bank I wore a beret rather than a kerchief, though I knew my ears would freeze, and walking gratefully into the warm lobby, I sat down to wait. There were several ahead of me—a graying woman who wore glasses, the frames mended with adhesive tape; a couple of teen-age girls who sat and giggled together; and one young fellow with big ears and very arched eyebrows that gave him a permanently frightened look.

A soft-spoken gentleman appeared finally and gave us the usual application blank to fill out. Then he led us each to separate little rooms where we took a short aptitude test. As we left we were told we'd be called later. Sure enough, next day the telephone rang and a pleasant voice said, "We'd like to have you come and work for us, Mrs. Bohner." Very welcome words, but there was something else I had to tell him. The next day I called in to explain. "You see, Mr. Gray, I'm a Seventh-day Adventist, and that means I couldn't work from sunset Friday night until sunset Saturday night."

He was kindness itself, but he said, "I'm afraid we'd have a hard time explaining to the other workers why you had special privileges. I don't think we could use you."

It was often like that. I applied for a filing job at the university library, and the librarian, also kind, said,

"I'm sorry, dear. I'd like to give you a chance, but this Saturday business—" She shook her head. "The other girls just wouldn't understand."

One day the City Employment Agency sent me with a card to the MacMillan Book Company, a factory that worked only five days a week. I thought they must have something to do with the famous textbook company and figured I was getting some kind of bindery job. As it turned out, this company had nothing to do with textbooks. Located in a sad, dark old building in a sad, dark section of town, this firm manufactured notebook binders.

My first assignment Monday morning was sitting at a long table with several other women sorting screws into little piles according to their size. It was a fascinating job which gave me free rein to think of other things, such as poetry and the books I wanted to write, but unfortunately I was soon promoted. Next day, I was put to work packing notebook covers with a bilious-looking girl called Irma as my boss. This wouldn't have been a bad job except that we spent half our time going after boxes in the storage room, an ancient warehouse entered by means of a dark passage.

The sagging roof and uneven floor were bad enough, but the worst part was the atmosphere. It was thick with dust and always cold. Whenever a load of boxes was needed, I had to drag a wagon through the narrow passage and into the storeroom where the boxes were piled ceiling high in a depressing kind of chaos. I meandered about in the frigid twilight looking for a

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

number on a box and amused myself with thinking what a glorious conflagration I could have if I dropped a match in the place. Then for once it would be warm.

Tuesday I had worked only a few minutes when I knew something was wrong. I looked at Irma; and there were two of her. I blinked and looked again and for the moment she disappeared. The shelves and benches and workers began revolving slowly around, and when I climbed a ladder to reach a high package, I just caught the shelf in time to save myself from pitching over headfirst. Then I began shivering, and I knew I had a fever. Wobbling over to Irma, I told her I was going home.

That siege of flu lasted three days. I was almost well Friday evening when a couple of old college friends dropped in and persuaded us to go away with them over the weekend. It was our intention to be back so I could go to work Monday, but, running into car trouble, we didn't get back until Tuesday.

As we opened our front door, the first thing that met our eyes was a telegram on the floor. "We wish to inform you," it said, "that you have been dismissed from the MacMillan Book Company." I handed Jack the yellow paper. "This calls for a celebration," I said. "Let's have some pizza."

After that I entered my name at the office of the Board of Education, and they promised to send me any children who needed tutoring. I waited a day or two and heard nothing.

Next I tried selling children's books. But not having

learned to love selling any better since my last experience, I didn't break any records.

One lovely day in May a strange bug caught up with me. I went to bed with a fever; no rash, no pain, no other symptom, simply a fever. Every morning it was down; every evening it went up to 103 degrees. At first I thought it was the flu, but when it hadn't gone after several days I began wondering.

I thought of all the fevers I knew of. I was pretty sure it couldn't be malaria. Somewhere I'd read about Rocky Mountain spotted fever; the only trouble was I didn't know whether it was the mountains or the patients who were supposed to have the spots. I didn't have any spots.

The mystery grew as my temperature continued to fluctuate. We'd delayed getting medical help for lack of money, but finally in desperation we went to a doctor, who didn't take long to name the bug. He took my temperature, pounded my stomach, and said one word: "Mononucleosis." "You'll have to have a blood test," he added, "but I'm quite sure that's what it is."

The word "mononucleosis" didn't enlighten us much, but it was a relief to know what I had, especially when it wasn't fatal and had such a nice, impressive name.

The doctor shot me repeatedly with several kinds of ammunition—vitamins predominating—and slowly I improved. After a couple of weeks my temperature began staying down as long as I stayed in bed. As soon as I got up or did anything active, I could feel my face begin to burn.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

It was at this time that Henry came along. Henry was a seventh-grade boy who wanted to be tutored in spelling. For \$1.25 an hour I'd have had to be pretty close to death to refuse him. So every evening, while my face burned hotter by the minute, I sat propped up on the sofa drilling Henry Popolini on his spelling words.

"Spell *restaurant*, Henry."

"R-e-s-t-e-r-a-n-t."

"Not quite. Think of it this way. Write down r-e-s-t. We go to the restaurant to rest. Now here's the part you tripped on. Let's pretend you're at the table in this restaurant and to call the waiter you say, 'Eh you!' Write down a-u, then r-a-n-t. Take a good look at the whole word. O.K.? Now spell restaurant." And that time he got it right. By such means we finally pulled Henry through seventh-grade spelling, and I was a few dollars richer.

By the end of that school year our old debts were paid, but we had nothing saved for further tuition. We decided to move to Takoma Park, Maryland, where we could both get work and also take classes at Washington Missionary College. Jack soon found a bookkeeping job in the Washington Sanitarium, and I, among other things, worked as a nurse's aide, proofreader, teacher's reader, and elevator operator. Since these were full-time jobs, our part-time classwork had to be a side line.

It seems that every trade has its private jokes. At the print shop, new people were told to look for "type

lice." At the woodwork shop jokers had asked, "Ever hit the wrong nail?" On the elevator it was, "Well, I guess *you* have your ups and downs."

The elevator was an ancient box hung by creaky cables. Into it went patients, visitors, nurses, stretchers, wheel chairs, and corpses. I might not have hated the thing so much if I hadn't always had to study while I operated it.

To begin with, the buzzer on the old machine sounded like a nest of angry hornets and never failed to make my blood simmer. If I was deep in thought over a difficult diagram in advanced grammar or was trying to finish an extra-long history assignment, the hornets were sure to buzz louder and oftener than usual until I was furious. Knowing I had no business feeling that way only made me worse, and my patience became thinner and thinner.

This old elevator had many peculiarities. It had to be leveled by hand, a trick requiring quite a lot of practice, and as it neared the top floor, if you didn't stop it soon enough, the weight at the end of the cable hit the bottom of the shaft with a resounding whack that was quite startling even when you knew what it was. It felt as though you'd hit the roof and were about to soar up through the heavens like some new kind of satellite.

But the most disturbing feature of that decrepit machine was its habit of stopping just anywhere in the shaft between floors if the outside doors weren't closed just right. I remember one day particularly, a rather

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

cocky-looking young fellow, hands in his pockets, stepped on and leaned back eyeing me the way some men always eye a waitress or an elevator operator, as though she were public property like a drinking fountain. "Third," he said, and then a nurse got on and we started. At second the nurse got off, and I thought I'd shut the doors as usual. We started up, and just as the last few inches of the second floor door were sliding out of sight at the bottom of the elevator, we stopped. I pushed the handle all the way in both directions, but nothing happened.

"Well, I guess we're stuck," I said.

"Yeah, guess so," my passenger grinned.

Kneeling on the floor I peered through the remaining crack of door glass where I could see the heads of the people who walked by on second floor.

While I looked, my passenger was watching me. "I always try to be a gentleman under such circumstances," said he cheerfully.

"Well, I should hope so," I exploded, giving him one of my schoolteacher looks which failed a little in regal dignity since I happened to be on my hands and knees. Just then I spied one of the sanitarium errand boys below and hailed him. He brought the credit manager, who happened to remember about the doors. When he shut them more securely, we resumed our journey to third, where I finally got rid of my "gentleman."

For two years Jack and I continued our program of work and study, never being too sure where we stood



While I looked, my passenger was watching me. "I always try to be a gentleman under such circumstances," he said cheerfully.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

in relation to graduation. One day toward the end of our second year we had a consultation with the registrar and were quite jubilant to find that we could finish in another year.

As we walked homeward Jack was trying to study lists of texts for his Bible class, but I kept interrupting.

"Aren't you glad?" I persisted. "Can you believe it? We'll finish in a year."

Jack looked up. "It means school this summer, you know, but I guess we can take it."

"Just think of it. After all these years in college—it'll be six by the time we're through—the peak is in sight."

"Well, graduation isn't the peak exactly."

"No," I said, "just another ledge. And what might the peak be?"

"I don't have to tell you that. You know I'll never be happy until I'm working for God as a missionary in some foreign country."

"And after that," I mused, "there'll be another peak, and then another, because we're climbing a mountain that reaches to heaven."

"Walk With Me in White"

"SOMETIMES I half wish," I said to Jane, "that I'd taken the nurse's course."

Jane was a graduate nurse who did floor duty on Hospital Four in the Washington Sanitarium where I worked the three-to-eleven shift as a nurse's aide. She was little, efficient, and somewhat cynical. Now she laughed. "The nurse's course? Oh, no, you don't. I half wish I'd majored in English like you. You'll have your degree by spring. Nursing! If I'd known what I was getting into—this messing around with blood and urine." Jane screwed up her nose. "Oh, well—now, I've got to go give DeVere her shot. What d'you suppose that woman would say if she knew she was being pumped full of sterile water?" Tray and syringe in hand, Jane hurried off.

"My B.A. by spring," I mused. How many years had I been toiling and praying toward that goal? "But we're going to make it," I said through set lips. "If we don't cave in from sheer weariness, that is." Downstairs in the sanitarium billing office, Jack was working the same shift. We both went to school mornings and tried to snatch some time to study as we walked home from classes or while we ate. At 11 p.m. we trudged slowly

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

home and were grateful if we managed to get to bed before midnight.

Looking up at the signal board where No. 438 had just lighted up, I came suddenly back to the job at hand. "Wonder what poor little Fanoroff wants," I said, hastening up the corridor. Mrs. Fanoroff was a little grandmother of eighty-five who lived for nothing but her children's visits. She was completely incontinent, but still tried to be independent. As I came into the room I noticed a puddle of water on the floor and an overflowing glass on the bedside stand. Evidently she'd tried to pour herself a glass of water and had run it over. Now, she was wringing her hands and rocking back and forth wailing, "Oh mine dear! Oh mine sweetie! Vat vill I do?"

"It's all right, honey," I shouted, for she was very deaf. "Next time put on your signal light first, and I'll come right away and pour you a drink." And I ran off to refill her pitcher and find a cloth to wipe the floor.

As I passed 436, Ruby, a freshman nurse, stopped me. Ruby had round, innocent eyes that gave the fleeting impression that she was just a little girl playing nurse. At the moment she looked anxious. "I don't know what's the matter with Mrs. Grimsby," she whispered. "She's been in her washroom over twenty minutes."

"Have you called her?"

Ruby tapped timidly on the toilet door calling faintly, "Mrs. Grimsby, what are you doing?"

"WALK WITH ME IN WHITE"

"I'm having a séance," came a stentorian voice. "Leave me alone." Ruby looked startled, and I giggled.

"Never mind, honey," I said. "I'll look after her."

I ran on to finish wiping Mrs. Fanoroff's floor, and as I passed 436 once more, I saw that Mrs. Grimsby was back in bed. She had on a lacy pink gown that made her stern face look hard as concrete by contrast, but I didn't miss the twinkle in her eye.

"You and your séances," I scolded as I entered the room. "Aren't you ashamed, scaring poor little Ruby like that?"

She chuckled a little. "Some of these students make me laugh," she said. "Can't go to the toilet in peace."

"How'd you like your back rub now?"

"Fine," she grunted, turning over on her stomach. "I'm not really such an ogre," she murmured, her voice muffled in the pillow. "I guess I just live alone too much."

"Now what you need is a 'budgie,'" I said, pouring alcohol on my hands as I started to rub her back. "You know, a parakeet. They're not too much trouble."

"Just keep rubbing my back, and I don't care what you talk about," she mumbled.

"But, really," I went on, "we have one, and he's better company than some humans. When he's out of his cage, he flies all over the apartment. At mealtime, if we let him, he'll light on our spoons or nibble at the bread."

Mrs. Grimsby laughed. "Sounds cute," she said. "Can he talk?"

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

"Quite a lot. You should see him cock his head on one side and say, 'I can talk people talk. Can you talk bird talk?' Of course, it took me a couple of weeks to teach him that, but he says it quite plainly now." I put down the alcohol and powder, and tied her gown. "There, now, I'll come back just before you sleep."

"Thanks," she said. "My back feels real good. Maybe I'll have to get me a parakeet."

I called on Mrs. Dumoff next. She was a plump Jewish woman who was always shouting excitedly, "Can you not see I am starvink?" At this, we nurses usually smiled and said nothing. Mrs. Dumoff was allowed to order her own meals, and her trays were so loaded with dishes there was scarcely room for the salt shaker. As I entered, she was sitting up reading, for when Mrs. Dumoff wasn't eating, she could always be found surrounded with religious books.

"How are you tonight?" I asked.

"Not so bad," she said. "I suppose you are vantage to prepare me for the night." And reluctantly she began gathering her books so I could make her bed.

Just then the bedside telephone rang and she motioned for me to answer it. "It's your daughter, Mrs. Dumoff."

"My daughter? Chust a minute," she sighed. Dropping her books and lying back weakly, she groaned, then reached out a languid hand for the receiver.

"Hello," she whispered, "no, not too well, darlink . . . no, I'm fery bad, tonight, fery bad . . ." and, moaning, she put her hand to her heart.

I left, then, as I was having trouble keeping my face straight. According to her chart, Mrs. Dumoff had heart trouble, but, much as she wanted her daughter to think so, she was not dying.

By this time Mrs. O'Toole's light was on, and I hurried down to see her. "Yes, Toolie, what is it?"

Her round, childish face was woebegone. "I ain't had my back rub yet. When ya comin'?"

"Just hold the fort, Toolie. I'll be back," I called, and ran down the corridor where three more lights had come on at once.

Mrs. James wanted ice water. Mr. Saunders wanted a newspaper and Mrs. Nevins had thrown up in the wastebasket. It was some time before I could get back to Toolie, as we called her.

Toolie weighed over two hundred pounds and was partly paralyzed from a stroke. The doctor had put her on a thousand-calorie-a-day diet, and when Toolie received her tray with its bowl of broth, its Ry-Krisp and cottage cheese, she'd inevitably push it away, spilling the soup, and swearing she wasn't "goin' to eat that bird food." And she didn't. But Toolie didn't lose weight, for she prevailed upon her friends to bring her chocolate bars, ice cream, and milk shakes, and she grew fatter by the day.

Preparing her for the night was a little like building the pyramids. I wondered how it could be done without a derrick. Tonight I soon saw that she needed to be lifted up higher toward the headboard of the bed, so I went for help. The other aide and I rolled her over

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

and put a clean, narrow drawsheet under her middle; then we stood each on one side of the bed and, taking an end of the drawsheet, managed to tug her into position. I rolled her onto her side and put two pillows at her back to keep her in place.

"Don't forget my little pillows," said she.

"They're here, Toolie," I said, tucking a pillow between her knees, and two pillows under her bad arm as she demanded.

"There, now," I puffed as I pulled up the covers, "I've got you packed in so tight, we could send you in the mail."

"What about my ice bag?"

"Your ice bag?"

"Yes, you know, fer my head. Here it is. The ice is all melted."

"O.K., Toolie," I sighed, as I took the gurgling, flannel-covered bag down to the ice box to refill it.

Finally with ice bag in place Toolie said, "Good night, Bohner. Yer a good girl. Ain't ya goin' ta pray fer me?"

After the prayer, I thankfully shut the door and mopped my brow. "Now, maybe I can grab a minute to look at my history for that test," I thought, and started toward the nurses' room; but on the way I passed the utility room. There they were—basins, bedpans, pitchers—waiting to be scrubbed and sterilized. I sighed and went to work.

Twenty minutes later I sat down with my history book and had just read one sentence when two signal

lights flashed on at once. Mr. Rubinofsky wanted fomentations on his back, and Mrs. Sawyer insisted that she must have an enema. By the time I'd applied the fomentation and talked Mrs. Sawyer out of the enema, it was five minutes to eleven.

I dropped onto a stool by the charting desk, conscious only of one great ache of weariness from my head to my feet. I was just getting up to put on my coat when Toolie's light flickered on.

"Lord, give me patience," I breathed, as I tottered up the hall. "Yes, Toolie," I called, opening the door.

"I gotta have the bedpan."

I hoped my weary muscles would comply. Back fell the two big pillows, the three little pillows, and off slid the ice bag as I pushed and tugged to get Toolie placed. Then I stood puffing a little and staring vacantly out the window as I waited. It was a damp night, black and wet like a cold fomentation cloth. I thought of the walk home, and my legs ached.

"I gotta have a clean draw sheet." The plaintive voice cut across my thoughts. "I'm all wet."

"Oh, Toolie, no!"

"Well, you needn't scold me," she whimpered. Toolie could always cry at the slightest drop of a voice.

"Now don't cry, Toolie," I said. "I'm not scolding you." As I ran to the linen closet down the hall for a fresh sheet, I glanced at the clock. Eleven-ten. Finally, when I'd put away the bedpan, tugged, rolled, and packed Toolie in again, it was eleven-twenty.

Jack was waiting for me in the lobby as I stepped off

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

the elevator. He looked at his watch. "Toolie again?" he asked.

"Who else?" I answered.

"Well, we can expect our senior year to be the hardest." Jack tried to be encouraging as we walked slowly home.

"I suppose so, but it won't even be my senior year if I fail history, and I haven't had five minutes to study all evening."

"Just six more months till May," Jack yawned as we plodded up the stairs to our apartment.

"Six months," I echoed and thought again of the cap and gown and the scrap of paper called a diploma.

Yet, for all its trials, I liked nursing. It taught me a great deal about people. A nurse has to keep telling herself that all patients are people. It's easy to forget sometimes. The snarling ones who seem like animals, and the dull, comatose patients, whom medical people call "vegetables," seem to have left the human race. They need loving care the most, and it's hard to remember that it matters.

Mr. Schmidt was a sad ruin of a man. His massive dark head, with its receding brow and sunken eyes, usually lay back listlessly on his pillow. When he did sit up, his neck seemed too scrawny to support his head. Stretched on the bed, his gaunt, bony frame was quite helpless, for Mr. Schmidt had had a stroke.

His stepdaughter had told me how he'd been an orchestra conductor and a brilliant amateur violinist, and as I made his bed and rubbed his poor bones with

alcohol, I tried to imagine him as he had been once—tall, dignified, intelligent, happily surrounded with music. It took all the imagination I had.

Some days he was far away "holding conferences with death," I used to think, but one day he seemed more alert, and I tried making conversation. "What's your favorite violin concerto, Mr. Schmidt?"

His face lit up immediately. "Max Bruch's first violin concerto," he answered quickly, and later he seemed pleased when I found him a little radio and turned it to the "good music" station.

A few days later as the aides and nurses met for the three o'clock report we were told that Mr. Schmidt was dead. My main feeling was one of relief. For him more than most I felt that death would be such a rest.

Sometimes the doctors forget that patients are people. I remember Mrs. Smith, who claimed to have terrible pain in her joints. When any nurse came near her, she drew her legs up and cried out in a way that did seem rather exaggerated. When the report was read that her doctor considered a lot of her trouble to be psychosomatic, the nurses exchanged knowing looks and from that time on Mrs. Smith was treated rather coolly. The nurses were determined that she wasn't going to put anything over on them.

As far as I was concerned, however, she was still sick. Maybe it was "all in her head," but, as I reasoned, her head was part of her body, and she still needed loving care.

A little later when the doctors discovered that Mrs.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

Smith was, in fact, very sick with a rare bone disease, and the ominous word "terminal" (which really meant "fatal") was typed on her chart, I was glad that I had never changed my attitude toward her.

One night as I went into her room for the usual good-night prayer, I wondered if Mrs. Smith knew that she was dying. As I turned to go, she said, "I do want to thank you for everything. You've always been so kind to me."

I couldn't form words around the lump in my throat, so I patted her hand and went out quickly to hide my tears.

I was always glad for the custom we have in Seventh-day Adventist hospitals of praying with each patient as we prepare him for the night. Very few people ever refused the prayer, yet there were some patients with whom I was tempted to omit the devotions. I remember Rabbi Green, one of the finest people I ever cared for. He had had a stroke, but being of a restless disposition, he found it hard to lie calmly in bed as his doctor had advised. He was very careful to observe the many rules of orthodox Judaism. In the drawer of his bedside table he kept his little black skullcap, and before taking even a drink of water, he always put it on.

The first evening I cared for him I wanted very much to forget all about the customary prayer. After all, who was I to offer to pray with a religious leader? But finally my conscience overruled and I said, "Mr. Green, it's our custom here at night to have prayer with every patient. Would you like me to pray with you?"

"WALK WITH ME IN WHITE"

He looked a little surprised, but smilingly agreed, and I, faltering a little, prayed, "Dear Father, please be with Mr. Green this night. Give him rest and sleep, and if it be Thy will, heal his body so that he may serve Thee better, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

The rabbi smiled. "Thank you, Mrs. Bohner. Do you always make up your prayers? What I mean is, you don't memorize a prayer?"

"In our church we just pray from the heart," I said. "It makes God seem more real."

"Well, I thank you. You don't believe as I do, but God always honors sincere faith."

I continued to pray with the rabbi nightly. He was a widely traveled man with a lively mind, and we discussed many things besides prayer: politics, racial problems, religion, Jews.

One afternoon some weeks later as I stood by the main counter arranging my thermometer tray, Rabbi Green came limping by, fully dressed and leaning on his cane.

"I just came to say good-by, Mrs. Bohner," he smiled.

"Good-by? You're going home? That's wonderful, but we shall miss you. Are you really well enough?"

"Yes, I'm better now. God has healed me through your prayers," he said earnestly. And, turning to go, he called, "God bless you" over his shoulder as he limped to the elevator.

One Friday night I went into Mrs. Dumoff's room and found her as usual sitting up reading, this time the

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

Talmud and other holy books for the Sabbath. She read me a Sabbath psalm, and I told her how beautiful it was. There was work to do elsewhere, but I felt, somehow, that she wanted me to stay. Suddenly she turned searching eyes on me and said, "I have a friend who tells me that Jesus Christ is the Jewish Messiah. What do you think?"

For a moment I had the strange feeling that I'd always been waiting for her to ask this question. "I think your friend is right," I said. "I believe that Jesus is the Messiah, not only because my parents brought me up in that way, but there is proof. Your prophet Daniel prophesied the exact time that the Jewish Messiah would come. Jesus fulfills that prophecy."

Mrs. Dumoff looked at me, silent and questioning.

"Wait a minute," I said. "I'll get you a book about this." I darted out to the rack where the free books were displayed, but the book I sought was not there. I glanced at the signal board. No one needed me at the moment, and I ran down to third. No book there. Finally on the second-floor book rack, I found what I was after, the little book *Prophecy Speaks*, by Earle Albert Rowell.

Mrs. Dumoff took the book with no comment, but she began to read it and continued to read as long as I was on duty that night. The next day I was eager to see whether or not she'd have any comments to make, but when I opened the door of 432, she was gone, and the bed had been made up clean.

"Her daughter suddenly came and took her home," the supervisor explained. Though I never saw Mrs.

Dumoff again, I've always felt it was more than chance which led me to give her that book the last night of her stay in our hospital.

In my classwork the second semester I took a wonderful Bible course studying the book of Revelation under Pastor Leslie Hardinge. Many times the inspiration of that class followed me into the hospital ward. Jesus' words in Revelation 2, "They shall walk with Me in white," seemed to me to have a special meaning for nurses, for I knew He often walked with me through the weary corridors and into the presence of death.

I believe He was with me especially as I tried to help Mrs. Gray. I never knew exactly what was wrong with her, but for that matter, I'm not sure the doctors did. One thing we all knew was that she was pretty well beyond human help.

I first noticed her because she suffered so uncomplainingly, more patiently than anyone I'd known. Her thin face with its frame of sparse brown hair only made her wide gray eyes seem wider. Painfully thin, her arms and legs were rough and scaly like the limbs of a tree.

I came in one night to find her scanning the want ads in the paper. "I'm looking for a second-hand toy car or something for my little boy, Jimmy," she explained. "He'll be three on Wednesday." But as she turned the big pages, looking eagerly, she added, "There doesn't seem to be a thing."

From a former visit I remembered the little boy, a tiny mosquito of a child, wide-eyed, pale, and very serious. My heart had ached just looking at him.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

That night when I told Jack of the coming birthday, he remembered Dr. McNeil, who was a man you went to when you needed help beyond the call of duty. It so happened that the doctor did know of a toy airplane that someone wanted to get rid of. It was in good condition and big enough for a little boy to get into and pedal around. We went to get it the next morning, and Mrs. Gray was overjoyed when we wheeled it into her room. That afternoon when Jimmy saw that little plane, his small face brightened in a rare smile. It was a delight to see him dance around saying, "Oh, oh, is it mine? Can I really keep it?"

How I wished we could have helped his mother as easily. One evening I felt especially anxious for her. Death seemed an almost tangible presence in the room, and I prayed for the right words.

I began the usual treatment, rubbing cold cream into her rough skin, and as I soothed, I began telling her about my Bible class in Revelation. "That book reveals such terrible events to come upon this world, Mrs. Gray, that you'd be surprised at what I think sometimes. I enjoy living, and I'm not morbid, but, you know, I sometimes think that those who die will be the lucky ones. In fact, Revelation speaks of a time when those who die will be fortunate: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hencefore,' the apostle said. To those who are ready, death is just a sleep until the resurrection, anyway, and to me, it's kind of restful to think of sleeping through all that trouble."

She sighed and said nothing for a moment. I lifted



His small face brightened in a rare smile. It was a delight to see him dance around, saying, "Oh, oh, is it mine? Can I keep it?"

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

her hand and started massaging her arm. She was looking out the window to the gray sky above dark trees where the setting sun had left a thin line of gold.

"You almost make me glad to die," she said evenly, and paused, "only I'll hate leaving my little Jimmy."

"God will take care of your Jimmy, dear," I said, trying to swallow the ache in my throat. I finished the treatment and drew up the covers; then I turned out the light to hide the tears in my eyes. For a moment I, too, looked through the dusk to the fading line of gold where, now, the first star shone. When I could talk again, I said, "I'll pray now, if you like." She didn't say anything, only reached for my hand.

"Dear Father," I began, "Thou hast created all, and Thou canst heal and give life." My voice trembled a little, and I stopped and bit my lip. She was so brave. I must not break down. "Father, do Thy will," I said, "and help Mrs. Gray to be ready for whatever comes. Give her peace and rest this night, in Jesus' name."

Slowly I turned to go. In the light from the hall I could dimly see her face, smiling now and calm, and once more I remembered that Death is a conquered foe. His presence was no longer the tangible one in the room, but close around I felt "the everlasting arms" encircle us with peace.

Such experiences made me wish to be a fully trained nurse, but it was too late to be starting a new career. I treasured my experience as an aide. It taught me much, but, above all, I learned how slight a thing death may be to those whose connection with Life is sure.

What Is a Diploma?

IT WAS our senior year at Washington Missionary College, and school was out for the Christmas holidays. With no classes to attend we were allowing ourselves the luxury of a leisurely breakfast and were talking over what we should do after graduation. "I'd be perfectly satisfied," Jack was saying between bites of toast, "to stay right in the billing office at the San."

I salted my egg and said nothing, knowing there'd be more to follow, and after a minute, he added, "That is, if nothing more interesting opens up."

"Like what?"

Jack put down his glass. "I don't know how long it's been, but it seems that I've always planned to be a missionary. There have been missionaries in my family for years, and I won't be satisfied to stay here until we've at least had a talk with the men down at the General Conference."

I put more bread in the toaster. "Now help me watch this," I said. "I don't call this machine 'the incinerator' for nothing." Then I remembered Jack's last statement. "What men?" I asked.

"Elder Dunn is in charge of the mission appoint-

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

ments for the South American Division, and since that's where I'd most like to go, I think we should talk to him."

"You really seem to mean it," I said. "Frankly, I wish you didn't. If I were going anywhere, I'd choose Africa, but I really don't want to go anywhere. A visit would be all right, but I wouldn't want to *work* in another country."

"Why not?" Jack balanced his fork on his finger while he waited for the toast.

"Well, for one thing, I want to teach English, mainly literature and creative writing. In a foreign country any English I'd teach would be bare—well—just rudiments and grammar, which has its place, but I don't want—"

"Watch it!" Jack shouted, jerking open the smoking toaster and throwing out two slabs of charcoal.

"Best apartment-size incinerator in the country," I said, picking up two more slices of bread. "If we go overseas, we must be sure to take it with us for sentiment if for nothing else."

"Don't make any more toast for me," Jack said, pushing his chair back. "It's getting too late. Let's go talk to the men tomorrow. Knowing about some definite call might make you feel different."

"It sure would," I laughed. "But all joking aside, you know I'm willing to go where God wants us." And we dropped the subject for that day.

I'll never forget that visit we made to the General Conference office the next morning. Looking back now, we can see how God led us. We went first to Elder

WHAT IS A DIPLOMA?

Dunn's office, but finding him gone, we went to see Elder Bradley, the General Conference secretary responsible for the Far Eastern Division, who was looking after the South American business in Elder Dunn's absence.

Jack told him we wanted to be missionaries and that he would be most interested in a business opening, though we both would teach if necessary.

Elder Bradley questioned us about education and work experience before reaching for his file. The fact that we were older than most college graduates and that we had had some practical experience in working was in our favor. He began looking through the file of calls on hand from the South American Division. "Let's see, nurse wanted in the Argentine . . . evangelist . . . doctor . . . secretary . . . doctor . . . There doesn't seem to be any opening in South America at the moment," he said. "Would you be interested in the Far East?"

We must have murmured something. I don't remember, but I know we didn't jump with glee. Elder Bradley, however, had begun going through the Far Eastern file. "Doctor for Manila . . . nurse for Bangkok . . . builder . . . teacher, yes, here's something. The Far Eastern Academy needs a principal who can be business manager. Must have a wife who can teach and also be a food service director."

"What kind of school is that?" we asked.

"It's an academy very much like any Adventist academy here in the States. It's run for the mission-

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

aries' children. Having a school for teen-agers out there helps to keep many families in the field who would otherwise feel they had to bring their children home for academy. It's a small school. No more than fifteen or twenty children."

"You mean English and everything would be taught the same as it is here?" I asked. I was feeling the first spark of enthusiasm I'd known since missions had been mentioned.

"Yes," he said. "It's an American school in a foreign setting."

"I'd be willing to do that," I said with decision.

"Sounds all right," Jack said.

"Where, please, is Singapore?" My wandering eyes fell on a large map of the Far East hanging on the wall, and we both went over to look at it.

"It's halfway around the world," Jack remarked, setting his finger on the name *Singapore*, just at the tip of the Malay Peninsula.

"That's right," said Elder Bradley. "From the east coast of the States it doesn't make much difference whether you go east or west to get there. The distance and the fares are about the same."

The more we learned of Singapore, the more our enthusiasm grew. We filled out application blanks for the mission board to consider and then left.

On our way home, I said, "I somehow feel that God wants us to go to Singapore."

Jack squeezed my hand. "Why?" he asked.

"Well, if we'd gone at any other time and Elder

WHAT IS A DIPLOMA?

Dunn had been there, we'd have found no calls for South America, and maybe he'd have sent us to Elder Bradley, but quite likely he might have said, 'Come back in a month,' and we'd have missed this Singapore call."

"Well, just remember we don't have the call yet."

"I know, but just the same—"

By the end of January we had been duly called to the Far Eastern Academy, had accepted, and had passed our physicals. Then began a hectic existence in which we worked our regular hours at the Sanitarium, tried to keep up our classes, and between times, made rushing trips to town to shop for a five-year supply of clothes, shoes, and school equipment.

Choosing our route, the transportation bureau thought that since we lived on the east coast, it would be more convenient for us to go east. Since we knew we might not have another opportunity, we planned to change ships in England and to take a month visiting Europe at our own expense. We hoped to keep our expenses down by staying with friends in England, with relatives in Germany, and in as cheap accommodations as possible everywhere else. As our plans took shape, it became apparent that, in order to have time to travel, we would have to take our exams early and skip graduation.

"There's no other way," Jack said. "We've got to take time to visit both our families before we go. We'll be gone five years, you know."

"I suppose so," I said a little sadly, thinking of the

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

graduates in their caps and gowns, the firm beat of the processional, the smell of the roses. "We can't have everything, I guess, and seeing Europe is a pretty fair pacifier. We will get our diplomas, and that's the main thing."

Thus it was that on June 21, just three weeks after we would have graduated, we leaned on the deck rail of the Empress of Canada and watched the last hazy tip of North America melt into the sea. We blinked hard at the mist that stung our eyes. Having to say good-by again and again is the hardest thing about being a missionary.

Our month in Europe was all we had dreamed it would be, and the voyage on through the Mediterranean and down through the Red Sea and eastward was a steady succession of opening vistas and new ideas. We gave very little thought to the fact that college was over, and that we had our degrees. Nothing had happened to make us realize it.

Finally, after we'd been in Singapore three months, our diplomas caught up with us. By this time we had the academy well started. In fact, we were surrounded with it, for we'd given over most of our house to the school. The front bedroom we turned into a library, our dining room was the school dining room, and part of our drying room on the ground floor had been partitioned off for the boys to live in. It wasn't easy, but we were doing the work we'd been called to do, and we were glad we'd come.

Jack came in with the mail on a certain hot afternoon



The voyage through the Mediterranean and down through the Red Sea and eastward was a steady succession of new vistas.

THE LONG, LONG TRIAL

and handed me a package. Opening it, we took out our diplomas and looked at the proof that we had graduated. Overhead the ceiling fan lazily stirred the heavy air. The cloying fragrance of frangipanis drifted in through the wide screened windows, while all around the house I heard the breeze lightly clattering the palm fronds in a sound like the patter of distant applause.

It was hard to realize that we had really finished college, and long after Jack had gone back to the office I sat thinking, looking back over the long, long trial. The years had been long, the work hard; but had the struggle really been a trial? What good had come to me from this diploma? As I tried to savor its worth, I realized that my deepest feeling was gratitude to God for allowing me to be born poor.

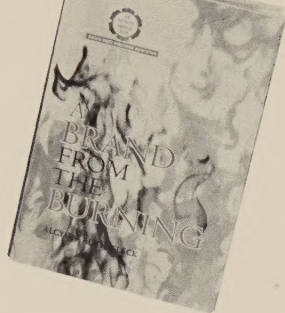
Poverty had forced me to wash woodwork, bedpans, floors, and children. I had picked peaches, grapes, and potato bugs. Because I was poor I had learned to make over old clothes, pound a nail straight, and iron shirts. I had sold books, tutored children, read proofs, run elevators, rubbed backs, and—slowly—become educated.

The certificate in my hand proved that I had learned something from books; but the happiness in my heart proved that I had learned something good from life, and much of that good I had learned from work.

A graduation program fell out of the package, and as I looked at it, I thought I could see the graduates in caps and gowns moving in stately lines to the dignified rhythm of the processional. A wave of nostalgia broke

WHAT IS A DIPLOMA?

over me, but it quickly receded, and there were no tears to brush away. I remembered the wise words of Stevenson in his essay "El Dorado," for they well summed up my conclusion: "O toiling hands of mortals, O unwearied feet. . . . Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labor."



A BRAND FROM THE BURNING

by Alcyon Ruth Fleck

Andrés was a Roman Catholic priest of Spain, who broke with his religion and all that was linked with it to become a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

This story gives the background of Catholic training, with its sacrifices, regimentation, and torturing of soul and body. The young priest's ministry in China and Central-America are portrayed in vivid style. A conflict develops in the heart of the priest as he is caught between tradition and the search for truth. At last he is challenged by an Adventist church member, and this is the beginning of a dramatic change in his experience.

The attempts of the church priesthood to hold Andrés by reasoning, threats, and physical violence are fully presented by the author. The struggle within his own mind and the outcome are the climax of the book.

The biography, written by the wife of the missionary who brought Andrés from Catholicism to Adventism, is factual, yet filled with exciting human interest, sympathy, pathos, and romance. The setting of the story is in Spain, China, Rome, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the United States.

This is an inspiring, enlightening, entertaining book, filled with the highest spiritual quality and rich in Christian devotion.

Pacific Press Publishing Association
Mountain View, California



Olivine Nadeau Bohner

The "Long, Long Trial" records the experiences of the author from her girlhood to her marriage and graduation from college. A trial it was, of courage and persistence, but related so lightheartedly that the reader sometimes forgets the serious undercurrent in the fun of daily living enjoyed by this skillful and irrepressible writer.

That poverty need be no hindrance to happiness or to progress is proved again and again as Olivine sorts her way hilariously through the box of clothing from the Ladies Aid Society, jostles her sisters for a place before the cracked mirror, or scrubs floors to keep in school, always keeping her vision "beyond the pail" (the scrub pail, of course).

Willing (?) to work at anything, even furniture making in an academy shop, she stands stoutly by her determination to get an education. Colporteur, school teacher, and nursing come later. Then marriage, and finally the long-sought degree and the mission field.

Once you start to read, you will not want to put down this moving account of a talented girl and her youth-long fight with the foot-pound.

